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STUDIES IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

JESSE R. KELLEMS, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.

STUDIES IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

BEING THE LECTURES DELIVERED IN MARCH AND APRIL, 1925, BEFORE THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE, DRAKE UNIVERSITY

BY

JESSE R. KELLEMS

D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.

EVANGELIST, DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

With Introduction

BY

JESSE CALDWELL, D.D., LL.D.

DEAN, DRAKE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE

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NEW YORK

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TO

JESSE M. BADER

SECRETARY OF EVANGELISM, UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY, COUNSELOR AND FRIEND, THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

In the stress and strain of the religious readjustments of our day there is a real need for a new presentation of the doctrines of salvation. To be effective, the statement of these doctrines must appeal to the thoughtful as reasonable, and to those in search of assurance there must be an element of satisfaction. They make their strongest appeal when based on sound interpretation of the New Testament. The satisfactions of the past have emphasized various elements as the way of peace—union with the Divine—the consciousness of Sonship. The emotional, intellectual and volitional must be taken into account if the presentation is well rounded. If this is done, and at the same time a sane Biblical support is found, the doctrines will meet with response. The now prevalent belief in psychological unity in contrast to the older faculty psychology makes harmony of the elements essential to peace of mind. The consciousness of dependence will rest more comfortably when its beliefs are supported by the authority upon which it relies.

There is also in our day a struggle between the so-called religious and the so-called ethical conceptions of salvation. In a sense this is the old struggle between grace and law. Men feel the need of grace and forgiveness; they also need the strength to live. In fact, the latter often depends on the former. However, this must not conflict in theory with our best ethical ideals.

In a world that thought of the flesh as all bad, salvation was thought of as a change of nature. The things of the world were inherently evil, therefore salvation must be the attainment of a transcendent nature, but the evidence of this change was usually sought in a religion below consciousness. Present-day believers are not likely to remain happy in an experience so completely mediated by non-rational means. The sense of sin, with its deadening hand, must be replaced by a living faith that will give courage to growing character. An inner experience there may be, but the experience itself must be permanent if it is to give an abiding assurance. This sense of confidence will be strengthened and made more permanent by a formal tying up of life with the ideals and purposes of an organization made up of those with similar experiences. Strength and stability will come from the common consciousness.

Seemingly, at times, salvation has been thought of as giving hope for the future alone. The self-consciousness, due to the revival in belief in the life that now is, has led our present day to ignore in some measure such a future. Neither the present nor the future needs to be depreciated in order to heighten the other. What is really wanted is a doctrine that is comprehensive enough to be inclusive of this life and of that which is to come. An all-embracing redemptive purpose must challenge our finest aspirations of hope, now and for eternity.

Finally, our conception of salvation will depend in very large measure upon our conception of sin. In a growing world of contacts sin itself becomes more

complex. A mere struggle between the flesh and the spirit may have been conceived in the past as altogether individual, but the social consciousness of our day has a growing sense of the solidarity of the race. The old Adam is none the less real, and human nature must still be changed, but the change of nature is vastly larger than the individual. It is a matter of the redemption of the race as well. Salvation is no less an individual affair, but it is vastly more than that, it is a social affair of universal scope. Social righteousness is demanded that shall give justice to weak and strong, opportunities for realization in harmony with the given possibilities. Men want to live in a world of love instead of hate. These ideals of realization are not merely for self, but they are for a world environment that is not the creature of some demiurge but the very Kingdom of God.

Dr. Kellems has given us, in his "Studies in the Forgiveness of Sins," a well-balanced discussion of this important problem. It is sanely Biblical, but shows familiarity with the modern viewpoint. The Studies are true to the position of the religious people with whom the author is identified—a people whose passion is Christian Unity and which they believe is best promoted by an effort to return to the New Testament ideals, doctrines and practices.

Jesse C. Caldwell.

College of the Bible,
Drake University,
Des Moines, Iowa.
March 29, 1926.

PREFACE

The following work, which does not in any manner claim to be an exhaustive study of that inexhaustive subject, "The Forgiveness of Sins," has been written from the point of view of the soul winner. What message should one know if he would win men to Christ? This should be the first question in the mind of the reverent student of the Word of God. Is there a heart-theme around which all the rest of the revelation lies? To the author of this work there is. That theme is the forgiveness of sins through Christ.

To one acquainted with the tendencies of modern thought, the necessity of a recall to the foundational things in the Christian Revelation is apparent. On one hand, there are those whose constant attenuation of the Gospel message, and the steady reduction of the content of the Christian blessings which the Gospel can promise, tends to make the Good News evaporate into thin air. On the other hand, there are those who are insisting upon non-essential things, as matters of faith, so vital that without them there can be no salvation at all. Between these two, there lies a middle road, one which offers a safe and sure path. There is, in the very center of the whole Christian scheme, the wonderful promise that God, because He loves us, sinners though we be, will grant us free and full forgiveness through His holy Son Jesus. Without this

there could be no Christianity. It is surely the very heart and center of the Gospel as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Any study of this fascinating subject must have respect to the manifest divisions of it. There are really just two parts to it,—that which God has done for us, and the human response through faith. No matter from what angle we may view the subject, these two divisions stand forth clearly. And this has been the manner in which the present work considers the whole scheme of divine forgiveness.

There are places in the discussion in which the usual moderation of the scholar is thrown aside. In none of these, few as they are, has the author felt that he has exceeded the bounds of critical caution. It has been his aim to set forth fairly the great theme as it engrosses the minds of the Apostolic Writers, feeling that in doing so, he is presenting that message which must lie at the foundation of the thinking of every man who would bring others to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Nothing is needed by our own age so much as a conscience concerning sin, and a willingness to know God's method of dealing with it. Would not a restudy of the whole question, in the light of the acknowledged fact that, with all our scientific attainments, we are more murderous, more adulterous, more covetous, than ever before, yield blessed results? To the author this is apparent. We must know this message or have no Gospel, for that God, through Christ, forgives our sins and makes possible our sanctification is the Gospel of Christ.

The author wishes to express his thanks to those who have made possible the appearance of the book in its present form. To Principal A. R. Main, M.A., of the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, Melbourne, Australia, is due his gratitude for the suggestion out of which the work grew, in his invitation to write a series of articles for the *Australian Christian* and for his kind permission to use these articles as one chapter. The faculty of the College of the Bible of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, has also laid the author under a debt in the opportunity which their invitation to deliver a series of lectures afforded to present the great subject of forgiveness in that manner. These lectures were delivered while the author was happily engaged in an evangelistic campaign with Dr. Charles S. Medbury and Dr. Sam Mathison of the University Church of Christ, Des Moines, Iowa, and the Very Reverend W. P. Paterson, D.D., Dean of the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh, admired teacher and friend for numerous kindly suggestions in regard to the work. He wishes also to thank his brother-in-law, Mr. George H. Ramsay, B.A., pastor of the First Christian Church, Evansville, Indiana, for his helpfulness in preparing the manuscript for publication.

JESSE R. KELLEMS.

Eugene, Oregon,
September 22nd, 1925.

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STUDIES IN
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS

It must be evident to every student of divine things that the subject of forgiveness is central in the study of God's gracious dealings with men. Without an understanding of it, there is no understanding of the various other relations which exist between God and man. Dr. Denney has well said, "There is in truth only one religious problem in the world—the existence of sin—and one religious solution of it—the Atonement, in which the love of God bears the sin, taking it, in all its terrible reality for us, upon Himself. And nothing can be central or foundational, either in Christian preaching or in Christian thinking, which is not in direct and immediate relation to this problem and its solution." [1] How to be forgiven? This is the question which will come with great force to every man who has his conscience stirred concerning sin. And no matter how hardened he may be, there must come a time in which this conscience-stirring will take place. What is this forgiveness? How far does it go? Is it but tolerance on the part of the offended? Is it only that He will remit the punishment which we so richly deserve? Or, is there more? Does it go so far as to mean a restoration to that place which we occupied before the fall? To a consideration of these questions,

[1] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 237.

with special emphasis upon the last one, will we devote ourselves in this first study.

I. THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

To discover the basis of the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles on the subject of forgiveness of sins, we must go to the Old Testament. In the teaching of the Prophets, especially, do we find the foundational ideas which were developed with such clarity in the new dispensation. It is notable that the language in which the New Testament ideas of forgiveness are cast was developed in the prophetic teaching. A brief study of these basic ideas as they are revealed in the Old Testament will best prepare for a more exhaustive study of the nature of forgiveness, as it is set forth in the life and teaching of our Lord and illustrated in the progressive thinking of the Apostles.

1. Forgiveness is frequently considered under the somewhat official word "pardon."

Forgiveness and pardon are essentially the same thing, although there can be no doubt that forgiveness is a deeper, in that it is a more personal, word. The great statement in Isaiah, so familiar to all Christians, speaks of the willingness of Jehovah to receive the sinner and to pardon his sins. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). Here the willingness of Jehovah to pardon the penitent is emphasized in

the words, "He will abundantly pardon." There will be in His heart and mind no reservations; it will be pardon to the full. The terms upon which this pardon is to be so fully and freely granted are simply stated that all may understand. The wicked must forsake his wicked way, and he must return to Jehovah. The unrighteous man, leaving his unrighteous thoughts, must turn his mind and heart to Jehovah. It is almost a forensic term, the word pardon, but nevertheless the picture is a clear one; it is the picture of God waiting for the sinner, anxious to forgive. This willingness of Jehovah to pardon is further and even more directly affirmed by Nehemiah: "But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness" (Neh. 9:17). Here, again, the semi-judicial word is used, but it is to be observed that it more nearly approaches the deeper personal nature of Jehovah, His gracious and merciful character, the fact that He is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness. There could be no more noble foundation for the teaching of our Lord than this developed in the experience of Israel and expressed so clearly in the teachings of the Prophets.

2. Forgiveness is also spoken of as the "blotting out of sins." "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25). In the next chapter, the same Prophet declares, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isa. 44:22). Here, without a doubt, the idea of the forgiveness which Jehovah so abundantly offers to the

returning sinner is a "covering." His own mercy covers what has been amiss. By the covering, sin is hidden from His sight. It does not mean that the sin has not been committed; it has, and nothing can erase this as a fact, but it no longer stands between the sinner and God. It is "covered over," that Jehovah may no longer see it.

3. Growing out of this idea of a covering is another expression which occurs frequently as an Old Testament description of the nature of forgiveness, that of remembering our sins no more. In a statement already quoted (Isa. 43:25), Jehovah says, "I will not remember thy sins." Jeremiah tells of the new covenant which is to come, the chief glory of which is to be that Jehovah, in relation to sinners who turn to Him, "will forgive their iniquity, and their sin" will He "remember no more" (Jer. 31:34). There are other terms explaining this same idea of remembering sins no more, as the central meaning of forgiveness, as conceived in the prophetic teachings. Isaiah rejoices in this thought when he says, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind my back" (Isa. 38:17). Micah, in a glorious peroration, rejoices also in the same beautiful thought, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? he that retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea" (Micah 7:18, 19). How rich are the expressions here employed to emphasize the truth that

Jehovah really forgives. This is no longer official language; it is definitely personal now. Jehovah, because He delights in lovingkindness, and because He has compassion upon the sinner, "pardoneth iniquity," passeth over transgression, treads iniquity under foot, and casts sins into the depths of the sea. There is no more beautiful thought in all the Old Testament than that Jehovah's forgiveness is a personal forgiveness. It needs to be enriched by the teaching of Jesus, that it is personal because it is the forgiveness of a loving Father. But no more lofty heights are reached in all the old dispensation than this, that when Jehovah forgives, He forgets. This is always the glaring weakness of our human forgiveness; we say we forgive, but we cannot forget. It is a question not hard to answer; is there really any forgiveness at all, if it does not mean to forget? While the fact that sin has been committed can never be erased, yet, we can, if we truly forgive, treat the sinner as though he had never committed it. This is the meaning of forgiveness as the Prophets conceived it. Jehovah forgets, He remembers our sins no more. He treats the penitent one as though he had never been a sinner. This, as we will discover, is the real foundation of the teaching of Jesus, that Jehovah restores the sinner to the position he occupied before he offended. When Jehovah forgives, sin is cast forever behind His back; in the oblivion of the sea it is buried to rise no more; it will never come back to separate between the forgiven and God.

II. THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The conception in the teaching of Jesus.

Jesus, nowhere, directly discusses the subject of forgiveness. While it frequently has a place in His consideration of other subjects, it is never exhaustively treated. It is, so to speak, imbedded in His teaching, and He deals with it rather by way of illustration than by dogmatic statement. A study of the word "forgive" would not necessarily give us a correct idea of just what was in His mind when He tells us that God forgives, or that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. This word itself is a figurative word, and figurative words cannot be accepted as precisely defining the basic idea. Professor Stevens is right when he says, "Our Lord seems to have spoken of God's forgiveness of men rather incidentally and by allusion."[2] But by His allusions we can form a clear idea of what was in His mind when He tells us that God does forgive.

(1) In the familiar and well loved parable of the prodigal son, sometimes better called the parable of the loving Father, the great outlines of the Saviour's own teaching on this heart theme of the Gospel appear in unmistakable form. The son has wandered away. It is not a servant who leaves the house, but the son and heir, flesh and bone of the father's flesh and bone, a son of his love. Caring not for the pain which his unfaithfulness and prodigality causes to the father's heart, he throws away his substance in riotous living.

[2] "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," Stevens, p. 343.

As low as he can go, he falls. As far away from the ideals and protection of the father as it is possible for him to be, he wanders. But never in all this does he once fall from the love of the father. The father loves him with all the unreasoning, illogical love of a father for a son. In this parable there is no evidence of the father going after the lost boy. He seems to let him fight out his battle alone. There is no hint that a restraining word is spoken, or ought done, to bring him back to the protection of the paternal roof. But the wondrous thought which sparkles upon this parable like a dazzling gem on the robe of a queen, is that of the anxious, eager waiting of the father for the son's return. He feels that the lost boy will come back again. He cannot forever remain in the darkness and ruin of the awful life which he has chosen. The degradation which is his as a consequence of his prodigality will some day bring him "back to himself" and he will return to the father. And so it is that the father waits, and longingly looks into the distance, for his coming. One glad day he sees him as he wearily plods over the hill toward home. He "sees him afar off." What eager waiting for the first sign of penitence! In the homeward walk he sees it, and then follows the rapturous welcome. He falls on his neck and kisses him; he robes him and places a ring on his finger; he orders a feast of welcome for this one "who was lost and is found," for this one "who was dead" and is alive, and is to be treated as one who is alive. He does not receive him as a servant, though in the depths of his true penitence the son would have it so, he is a son and as a son he is received. The joy of the reception, the fact

that it is a father's reception of a son who has wandered away, back into the filial relationship,—such conceptions as these, though builded upon the prophetic teaching, are a decided advance beyond that teaching. There is in such an idea as this no hint of the law court; it is a personal forgiveness, a restoration of a son from an unfilial life to the protection and care of his home with his loving father. God forgives as a father; this is the glory and wonder of the teaching of our Lord.

There is an idea in the two other parables in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel which, as we have already noted, does not appear in the parable of the Lost Son. The whole chapter is devoted to a defense of His action in receiving sinners and dining with them. The three powerful parables are illustrations of God's interest in sinners, and his paternal concern over them in their wanderings from Him. In the parable of the lost sheep, he adds to the idea that the Father is anxiously awaiting the penitence of His children, that He may forgive, the further thought that the Father Himself goes after them to bring them back to His home. The shepherd, out on the mountains wild and bare, anxiously hunting the one sheep that has gone astray and the woman diligently sweeping the whole house that she may recover the lost coin are illustrations of the Father's seeking love. He is not passive; He is active in bringing about penitence and reconciliation. We shall advert to this again; it is sufficient here to note it as a distinct part of our Lord's teaching.

In the Sermon on the Mount, there are other allusions to forgiveness which help us to know what was

in the mind of Christ on this ever-important theme. If we are to be forgiven by the Father, we must forgive as our Father forgives. Even our prayer for forgiveness must be preceded by a forgiveness of those who have sinned against us. It is thus taught in the prayer which was to be a model for His disciples: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Our readiness to forgive in advance, as it were, to grant fully and freely such forgiveness, even before it is asked, is one of the conditions of our forgiveness by the Father. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." The so-called "hard saying" in the same sermon gives us the basis upon which such free and full forgiveness is founded. "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). God has loved us, even while we were His enemies, while we wandered in lust and shame, far from His home. As in the parable the father anxiously waited for the first sign of a penitent spirit, so our heavenly Father even in advance forgives us when we show the first signs of turning. It is not indicated that there is any forgiveness apart from a penitent turning to God, on the part of the sinner, but our Lord does intend us to understand by such words that the attitude of the Father is one of eager waiting to richly bestow upon us, when we leave the by-paths of sin, the bounteous forgiveness of His love.

There is yet one other idea as to the nature of the divine forgiveness, developed in the beautiful parable

of the Great Debtor (Matt. 18:21-35). The thought, as in that of the disciples' prayer, is still concerning our own forgiveness of those who sin against us. It is still the teaching that we must forgive, as God forgives us. One servant owed his Lord ten thousand talents,—an impossible sum. Never could he pay it. Even though all his family be sold as slaves, he could not pay the tithe of the vast amount which he owes. Then the king, moved with compassion, freely and fully forgives the debt. But the servant, instead of having his own heart touched by this wondrous magnanimity on the part of his Lord, went out, and taking by the throat a fellow-servant who owed him a paltry sum, demanded the immediate payment of the debt. God has forgiven us a load of debt which it would have been forever utterly impossible for us to pay. It was so heavy that under it we were doomed. But He forgave it all. Since God, our Father, has done so much for us, we should be willing and happy to freely forgive the little things which men have done against us. Thus it is that the Master, in answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?", answers, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21, 22). The cruel and revengeful can find no forgiveness at the Father's hands. They are not forgivable as long as this is their spirit. He who would be forgiven of the awful load of sins which he carries must possess the spirit of the Father, and forgive in the spirit of the Father, freely, fully, with unending liberality. After describing the deserved punishment of the servant to whom so much had been forgiven, and yet in whose

heart there was found no forgiveness for his friend, the Master says, "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother, from your hearts" (Matt. 18:35).

The teaching of Jesus on the subject of divine forgiveness would be incomplete if we did not note that which in it is most important of all: the forgiveness from the Father is mediated to man through Himself. Our very conception of a loving heavenly Father, comes through Him, for "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). It is clearly a part of our Lord's conception that in His life and death He does something which makes it possible for man to enjoy the forgiveness of his sins. There is a hint at this attitude in the words, "I am the way, the truth, the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). He has been teaching that the Father freely forgives; He loves the sinner and would have him return with contrite heart to the paternal home. But here He frankly states that the only way to that home is by Him. The key to this undeniable teaching is to be found in the truth that man alone does not know the Father and could not, therefore, come to Him. This stands forth in the words of Jesus, "All things have been delivered to me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).

There are two mighty statements of Jesus, which criticism has been unable to whittle away, in which our

Master definitely teaches that the divine forgiveness is indissolubly connected with His death. Because of something definitely accomplished by His death, something which could never have been accomplished unless He had died, the divine forgiveness is extended to the penitent sinner. The first one is the famous statement that He had come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). We shall advert to these passages and consider them more exhaustively, later; it is sufficient here to note that they do form a part of the teaching of Jesus upon the whole question, and that it is their manifest meaning that forgiveness is in some manner dependent upon His own death.

When we begin to talk of the death of Christ as a ransom for the lives of many, we may feel that we are in waters beyond our depth, we may feel that we are entering into a realm where we are not at all at home, but that such a realm is entered if we follow the teaching of the Master, there can be no denying. Dr. Denney has found the meaning of this puzzling passage when he connects it with what Jesus had said to His disciples about one's losing his life or saving it (Mark 8:34 ff.). There is here a circle of ideas in which the statement about a ransom for many finds contact. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life. For what should a man give in exchange for his life?" It is apparent from

this passage that Jesus believes there are conditions under which a man may forfeit or lose his life; that he may forfeit it to such an extent that it would be impossible for him, out of any resources which may be his, to buy it back again. This thing which it would be forever impossible for a man to do for himself or even for his brother, because of limited resources, the Son of Man did when He "gave his life as a ransom for many." We have neither time nor inclination to plunge into an impossible consideration of the question as to whom such a ransom would be paid. This we can never solve, neither does it logically concern us just now. It is enough to note that it is a part of the teaching of Jesus on the question of sin and its forgiveness. In a word, the forgiveness which God will give is conditioned upon the ransom which Jesus paid in giving His life. It is sufficient for us to "recognize the fact that the Lord speaks of the surrender of His life in this way. A ransom is not wanted at all except where a life has been forfeited, and the meaning of the sentence, unambiguously, is that the forfeited lives of many are liberated by the surrender of Christ's life, and that to surrender His life to do them this incalculable service was the very soul of His calling. If we find the same thought in Paul, we shall not say that the Evangelist has Paulinized, but that Paul has sat at the feet of Jesus. And if we feel that such a thought carries us suddenly out of our depth,—that as the words fall on our minds, we seem to hear the plunge of the lead into fathomless waters,—we shall not, for that, imagine that we have lost our way. By these things men live, and wholly

therein is the life of our spirit. We cast ourselves on them because they outgo us; in their very immensity we are assured that God is in them." [3]

There is but one connection in which we may understand the reference in the Supper to our Lord's blood as the "blood of the covenant," that in which the promise of a new covenant is made (Jer. 31:34). The very heart and foundation of this new covenant is to be the forgiveness of sins. "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." In a sense, it is to be a glorious renewal of the gracious covenant of former days, but it is to be unlike the old one. It is to be a covenant of the heart, one internal rather than external, and its chief glory is to be "that they shall all know me from the least unto the greatest of them, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." There can be no doubt but that Jesus had this prophecy in mind when He so solemnly said, "This is my blood of the covenant." It is placed beyond a possibility of successful contradiction, if we adopt the reading of many of the most ancient manuscripts, "This is my blood of the new (*καινός*) covenant." This new covenant which Jehovah had promised through the Prophet of old He is establishing, and by the sacrifice of His own life. All to whom its fundamental blessing of the forgiveness of sins shall come are forever to be indebted to Him,

[3] "The Death of Christ," Denney, pp. 32, 33.

because in His blood poured out, in His body broken upon the tree, He has made for it the foundation eternal. "It is a word which gathers up into it the whole promise of prophecy and the whole testimony of the Apostles; it is the focus of revelation in which the Old Testament and the New are one. The power that is in it is the power of the passion in which the Lamb of God bears the sin of the world. It is no misapprehension, therefore, but a true rendering of the mind of Christ, when Matthew calls the covenant 'new,' and defines the shedding of blood by the reference to the remission of sins." [4]

There is a school which makes vociferous and consistent objection to this teaching of our Lord, that forgiveness from the Father is in some manner dependent upon what He did in His death upon the cross. In a word, the objection states that any such teaching directly contradicts all that He has elsewhere taught on the same subject. The parable of the Lost Boy, in which the father forgives out of pure love, in which He forgives unconditionally, fully, and freely, is surely made void by such a position. It is thus a misrepresentation of the character of God as a loving heavenly Father and, therefore, destroys the whole Gospel.

On the face of it, this objection seems to be a valid one. When we probe it deeper, however, the fallacy of it readily appears. It is to be observed that in our present position the death of Christ is not considered as an isolated event. It is not this sublime event alone through which forgiveness is mediated to the sinner.

[4] "The Death of Christ," Denney, pp. 40, 41.

It cannot, therefore, be set over against the other teaching of our Lord on this wonderful theme. The death of Christ, and I am sure this is the teaching of Jesus, is the culmination of His life of self-giving. The whole purpose of His coming was accomplished in all that He did in that coming, in His life of service, in His teaching of the things of the Kingdom of God, and in His death upon the cross.

It is to be observed, also, that instead of this teaching about the necessity of His own death in order that forgiveness be given making void the love of God, it is the very manner in which that love is demonstrated. God's love is not an abstraction. It is realizable; we can know it; we can rest in calm assurance upon it. But it is realizable only because of the presence of our Master in the world. What we know about it we know because we have known Him. If one tries to think of the love of God apart from what he has learned of that love in his experience with Jesus, and particularly in his experience of the atonement, he will find himself lost. There is no contact with the saving love, the forgiving love of God, save as we have known it in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

One cannot help but wonder just what place those would accord to Jesus in the whole scheme of divine things who are so distressed about His teaching concerning His death and the forgiveness of sins. If we rest our faith in God's forgiveness upon the parable of the Lost Son alone, we have no place for Jesus in the Gospel. And yet, it must even then be confessed that we owe to Him our knowledge of the blessed truth that God forgives as a father. We cannot assent to any

position which would eliminate Christ from the Gospel. It is noticeable that frequently those who think of the forgiveness of the Father, without any special necessity for the death of Jesus included in the scheme of things, always speak of Him as "teacher." And such He is, to be sure; but is that all He is? Is it enough to think of Him as simply a teacher of God, and immortality, and righteousness? Is it sufficient that we believe in Him only as the first Christian, the first martyr to a new cause? Whatever we may say of this, it is enough to observe that it is not the place which the New Testament gives Him. It was not the place which He occupied in His own thinking. He not only tells us that God loves men and that His forgiveness to the truly penitent is freely, and fully, and unconditionally given, but He definitely places Himself in it all when He spoke of His blood as that of the new covenant, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. This is the position of Dr. Denney, and it is one which we are confident none can successfully deny as long as their faith in the New Testament lasts. "The love of God, I repeat, free as it is to sinful men,—unconditionally free,—is never conceived in the New Testament, either by our Lord Himself or by any of his followers, as an abstraction. Where the forgiveness of sin is concerned, it is not conceived as having reality or as taking effect apart from Christ. It is a real thing to us as it is mediated through Him, through His presence in the world, and ultimately through His death. The love of God by which we are redeemed from sin is a love which we do not know except as it comes in this way and at this

cost; consequently, whatever we owe as sinners, to the love of God, we owe to the death of Jesus." [5]

A summary of the teaching of Jesus concerning the divine forgiveness, as compared with that of the Old Testament, may be made in a sentence. While the Old Testament conceived the forgiveness of Jehovah as free and full, and while it was grounded in His mercy and lovingkindness, yet it is a near-forensic action. One cannot help but feel that there is in it the relations of the judge to the convict, it is more official, and its best description is that of pardon. Jesus teaches us, on the other hand, that God forgives as a loving Father. This is the crowning conception. None can be higher or nobler than this. God forgives the penitent because He loves the sinner. He forgives, or this forgiving love is made known and effective through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The specifically Christian idea of forgiveness may then be defined as the restoration through Christ of normal personal relations between spirits essentially kindred. Through Christ the wandering son is brought home to the Father.

2. The Apostolic Conception of Forgiveness.

(1) In the earliest apostolic preaching.

That the idea of forgiveness as taught in the life and work of Jesus underlies the preaching of the first age of the church is clear even in a casual reading of the Book of Acts. Peter, on Pentecost, in the first Gospel sermon, commands his fellow-Jews to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, to the end that they may receive the remission of sins (Acts

[5] "The Death of Christ," Denney, pp. 42, 43.

2:38). Here the conditions are clearly stated to be that one must turn from sin to the Father and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is granted on condition that we repent and obey the Master. It is here mediated through Christ. Before the Council he more boldly affirms the same proposition, saying, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:30, 31). The remission of sins which God will give unto Israel is made possible because of the exaltation of Jesus as Prince and Saviour, from His humiliation and death upon the cross. This very instrument of horror and shame is become the instrument of glory in that, through it, God brings to sinful Israel the mighty blessings of the new dispensation. In his stirring address in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul joins Peter in the strength and boldness of his pronouncement when, concerning Jesus, he says, "Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins." He tells Agrippa that the very essence of his divine commission is to be found in his work of opening the eyes of the Gentiles to the truth, and by doing so to turn them from darkness unto light, and from Satan's power unto God, and "that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18, 19). Peter refers to the conditions upon which forgiveness may be obtained on the part of one who is already a Christian when he councils Simon Magus to repent and pray to God "if perhaps the

thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).

From these illustrations it is apparent that the Apostles preached the same things concerning forgiveness as those which were in the mind of Jesus. There is no essential difference in their thought world and that of their Master as regards the nature and conditions of paternal forgiveness. If, therefore, as we go on beyond the first age of the church, we find these same Apostles using other terms to define their meaning when they speak of this wonderful blessing from God, may we not suppose that the terms they employ are but attempts to illustrate under other figures this fundamentally Christian idea with which we have been in such close contact throughout the Gospels and Acts? To me, this is the key to the solution of the many difficulties which confront us when we emerge from the Book of Acts into the Apostolic Letters. If we keep constantly in mind the fundamental idea of the divine forgiveness as we have found it present in the words of Jesus and reiterated in the early preaching of the Apostles, we shall not stray far away into the dangerous maze of speculation concerning the analogical words in which the Apostles later tried to make clear this idea.

(2) Forgiveness in the Epistles of Paul.

When we turn to the writings of Paul, we find a definite return to the juridical or forensic manner of handling the whole subject of the remission of sins. It is not a return to the position of the Old Testament, however. Under all the illustrative figures which Paul employs is the great foundational Christian idea. If

he uses the terms of the law court, it is that he may better explain to those who were so well acquainted with such terms, those to whom this very circle of ideas was native, the forgiveness which God, through Christ, has vouchsafed unto the penitent. It is significant that his use of the juristic terminology is almost entirely confined to his earlier and most controversial epistles. We have already noted that in the Old Testament the sinner is frequently conceived as condemned in his sins by the law, and as standing before the bar of Jehovah as a culprit stands before a judge. In the later Judaism, this conception was widely prevalent. The state of forgiveness was conceived as a state of "justification." The one forgiven was "justified" or acquitted before the law of the crime he had committed. It was only the natural thing, therefore, that Paul, in his mighty battles with the Judaizers, should employ this term which was so much a part of the mental possession of his determined antagonists. To them, forgiveness or "justification" was obtained by the works of the law, by human achievements. In a word, a man could earn forgiveness. To Paul, it was an act of favor or free grace on the part of the Father. To the Judaizers, it was a matter of strict observance of the letter of the law; to Paul, it was through the surrender of will and life in faith.

Professor Stevens has advanced an idea as to the reason for Paul's employment of this term, which is so directly in line with all we shall say that we quote him extensively here. "Why did the Apostle speak so infrequently of forgiveness, the term which the primitive preachers so constantly used to denote the incep-

tion of salvation? I think that the term 'justification' was better adapted to express the idea of a state of grace in which the believer stands (Rom. 5:2); it serves to emphasize the secure position of acceptance with God, occupied by him, notwithstanding the sin which still cleaves to him. It stood for the completeness and permanence of salvation. It is the verdict of God, which none can annul or gainsay." [6]

It should be clearly held in mind that Paul means "forgiveness" when he uses the term "justification." When he speaks of "justification, the reckoning of faith for righteousness, the imputation of righteousness apart from works, the forgiveness of iniquities, the non-imputation of sin," he is using equivalent terms. It is very clear, when we study such a term as "justify" or "justification," that many religious ideas must be conveyed to the mind in terms which express human relations. This is necessarily so, else they would be so abstract that they would not make logical appeal to the mind. There is no blinking the fact that religious language must be largely analogical. But no good interpreter would think, for a moment, of making such a term act as the form for the precise thought to be expressed. Such terms are illustrative of a grand truth, not in every particular, but in the main idea to be conveyed. Paul, so well acquainted with the circle of ideas to which such terms belonged, was much advantaged thereby in his controversy with the Judaizers who thought always in this circle. He did not consider it necessary to abandon this term, but since he and his opponents occupied in many things the same

[6] "The Theology of the New Testament," Stevens, p. 418.

ground, and as they had much the same vocabulary, he discusses with them on this common ground the question of how a man may come to the place in which the verdict of acceptance on the part of the Father will be pronounced.

Paul is in line with what we have discovered to be the Christian idea of forgiveness as revealed in the teaching of Jesus and the primitive Christian preaching. He grounds justification or forgiveness in the grace of God (Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7). It is, therefore, a free act on the part of the Father, or, to put it otherwise, God forgives freely. It is also a passion with him that the divine forgiveness is ours because of the life and work, and preëminently because of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. Forgiveness is mediated through the Saviour. It is with this in mind that he says we are justified by the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9), in the name of Christ (I Cor. 6:11), by Christ Himself (Gal. 2:16), and by the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4:25). To him there is no forgiveness apart from the Lord.

The conditions upon which one may receive this forgiveness are the same as we have universally discovered in Christian teaching,—repentance toward God and obedience in faith to Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1; Gal. 2:16, 3:24). What he means by justification by faith we will discuss later; it forms a separate part of our subject. It is sufficient here to note that the appropriation of the blessing of forgiveness, the entering into that new state where there is no longer any condemnation, is by faith in the Christ, through whom

the blessing is mediated to the lost sons and daughters of men.

It may be noted, if we would consider Paul's doctrine of the divine forgiveness systematically, that he defines it under two different but not contradictory thought forms. The one, we have been considering. The forensic term "justification," while it embodies the idea of the security and finality of the verdict which the Father pronounces in making the sinner free from whatever the past may have been, does not fully tell the story of what Paul meant when he speaks of the paternal forgiveness. He uses the vital, the biological terminology, as well as the legal. This we find under the beautiful and familiar conception of "dying and rising with Christ." And there is no incongruity between the two. Paul's Gospel is not two; it is one. The two different expressions are, as we have tried to show before, but two illustrative methods of making known the Christian idea of forgiveness, which he had received and which was the common treasure of the Church of Christ. The whole conception is beautifully set forth in the Roman letter (Rom. 6:1-5). The believer dies with Christ; he is raised with Christ. Here is gloriously expressed that sense of union with the Saviour, in which we are saved. When he is forgiven, the sinner enters into a new state which is "righteousness in Christ" (δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ) (II Cor. 5:21). To be in this new state of acceptance, i.e., to be in Christ, is the same as to have that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, and that righteousness which is from God (Phil. 3:9). To accept the forgiveness which God offers through Christ,

by obedient faith, is to "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27) by being baptized into Christ, and to "be in Christ" means to "be a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). Such a conception as this denotes a mutual fellowship, a mystic union. One of the favorite phrases of the beloved Apostle to the Gentiles, to describe that new condition or state into which the forgiven enters, is to be in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ, ἐν αυτῷ).

There is another side to this conception, one which grows out of it, the thought form in which he describes the entering of the forgiven state through Christ as dying to sin and rising to holiness. Such a view as this ought forever to absolve Paul from the stigma of being a mere legalist. For fear that there might arise in the minds of those addressed in his Roman letter an unwarranted inference from his doctrine of justification, he defends it by calling attention to its true implication. The imaginary objector might say, "It is well that we are free from the condemnation pronounced against our sins by the law. It is true that we are declared free, and that we are, therefore, restored to our former relation with the Father; but what about sins? They still remain with us. Will not such a doctrine even work to the encouragement of further sin?" This Paul refutes by showing the true inwardness of his teaching. Justification cannot be divorced from sanctification. It is in the new state that sanctification as regards the growth of moral character receives its strongest impetus to action. It is because we are in the new state that we have the power to grow into the likeness of Him who has made our salvation possible. To be accepted with Christ means that we break

off with the old life of sin, as a man breaks with the present life when he dies. It means that as we rise into the new state with Christ we rise into a life dedicated to Him, and, therefore, a life of holiness. This form of expressing the great Christian idea of forgiveness is, like the term "justification," an analogical term. But it does that which the forensic term fails to do: it conveys to the heart the personal element in the idea of forgiveness, which was so characteristic of the parabolic descriptions of Jesus. While the former word is Jewish in the derivation of its ideas, the latter expression belongs decidedly to Paul's Christian vocabulary. We shall consider this whole matter more carefully when we discuss the relationship between justification and sanctification. It is enough to emphasize here that we need not break with Paul on account of a supposed lack of ethical teaching in his doctrine of justification. When we consider the whole of that teaching, we find that it is ethical to the very heart. We get ourselves into trouble only when we try to treat his analogical terms as though they were precise forms into which we can put all his meaning on the subject. This he himself did not attempt, and neither should we try to do it. He is fundamentally in line with the Christian idea of forgiveness as it is taught in the Gospels by our Lord and repeated in the powerful preaching of the primitive church.

From our study of forgiveness, as it is exhibited in the Biblical references to which we have attended, we may say that in the main it can be summarized in two statements.

It is, first, a full and free pardon of our sins on

the part of the heavenly Father, and a restoration of the erring one to the position in the Father's home. It is a recovery of the sinner to normal personal relations.

In the second place, it is mediated to the sinner through the life-giving of Jesus Christ. Through Him we know of the Father's love, and in our union with Him in His death and resurrection we enter into a state in which there is no longer any condemnation. The state of forgiveness is, then, far from being a mere formal acquittal, a mere legal transaction or forensic procedure. It is a vital and life-giving experience through which we come into union with the world's only Saviour.

III. FROM OUR SURVEY OF THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF THE DIVINE ACT OF FORGIVING, IT IS EVIDENT THAT FORGIVENESS IS A CHANGE OF STATE OR RELIGIOUS CONDITION

In his great study of the "Remission of Sins," Alexander Campbell states six propositions illustrative of this fact, which may be very profitably considered here.

1. "The Apostles taught their disciples, or converts, that their sins were forgiven, and uniformly addressed them as pardoned or justified people." [7] Whenever men and women had come to the place in which they had believed in Christ, had repented toward Christ, and had been baptized into Him, they were then members of His church, and were always addressed by the

[7] "Millennial Harbinger, Abridged," Campbell, Vol. I, p. 510.

Apostles as those who through this process had become pardoned or justified persons (I John 2:12; Hebrews, Chapters 8 and 10; Eph. 4:32; 1:7; Col. 1:14; I Cor. 6:11; I Pet. 1:22; Col. 3:13). Here, then, is a definite and direct proof that Apostolic Christians were those who had entered into a new state or relationship to God, in which they were considered forgiven.

2. "The apostolic converts were addressed by their teachers as justified persons" (Rom. 5:1; 3:24; I Cor. 6:11; James 2:24; Rom. 8:33). Here it is the forensic idea of acquittal. The culprit is treated as though he had not done the wrong at all. He is free from it, and thus is justified. He has experienced a change from the state of guilt to that of pardon, or justification.

3. "The ancient Christians were addressed by the Apostles as sanctified persons" (I Cor. 4:16). They were universally addressed as though they had entered into a new relationship to God, in which they were set apart to a holy calling, in which they could, through the means of divine grace, attain to that holiness of character which becomes the sons of God. We shall consider more fully the relationship between sanctification and forgiveness. It is sufficient here to note as a fact that the Christians of the days of the Apostles were addressed as those who, through Christ, were sanctified persons.

4. "The ancient Christians, the apostolic converts, were addressed as 'reconciled to God'" (Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:21). In their acceptance of

Christ as Lord of life, through faith and obedience, they had completed the process through which they have entered into that state of joy in which the old barriers have been broken down, and they are received back into the Father's fold as though they had never been away. As soon as they become Christians, they are God's children; they belong to His family; they are reconciled to Him.

5. "The first disciples were considered and addressed by the Apostles as 'adopted into the family of God'" (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:5). There is not something else which requires to be done after those steps have been taken, which makes a sinner a Christian, in order to come to the definite knowledge of adoption. The same process which makes a man a Christian at the same time makes him an adopted son of God. From that day when he receives the forgiveness of past sins, he is God's child.

6. "The first Christians were taught by their inspired teachers to consider themselves saved persons" (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 1:18; 15:2). Obedience to the commandments of Christ, through faith in Him, brings one to the free and full forgiveness which is the gift of the Father; and when one has this forgiveness he is a saved person, he is one who from past sins is free.

It is to be noted that none of these terms are expressive of any quality of mind or soul or of any posture of the body. They are all indicative of a change of state or relation to God. It is not so much of moral change that they speak but of religion. This does not mean that such terms have nothing to do with

character; such, indeed, is far from the truth. We shall see eventually that out of the new state there blooms the new character, that there is a new character only because there is a new state. And it is clear, also, that these terms are not expressive of different degrees of salvation or of moral perfection; they are different terms to express the same new religious condition. It is evident that when one enters into the new state as expressed by one of these terms, he enters into all. In a word, every one who is pardoned, is justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved. Mr. Campbell gives a very fine illustration of this in a reference to the marriage relation and the change of state that takes place when one enters it. A woman changes her state in marriage. As soon as the words of the marriage ceremony are spoken she has become a wife. But she has also, by the same act, become a daughter, a niece, an aunt, a sister, etc. By becoming a wife she has entered into a score of new relations which before were not hers. So it is that, by entering into the forgiven state, the pardoned sinner becomes "an heir, a son of Abraham, a brother, or he is justified, sanctified, adopted and saved."

We may in summary, then, say that in the circle of New Testament ideas forgiveness is always a change of state, a change in which the wandering sinner is restored to the normal relations which by right belong to the son of the Father. Out of these new relations, and because of them, there is to be grown that new character which will be what the Father desires of those who are His.

IV. IT IS EVIDENT, ALSO, FROM THIS STUDY, THAT THE VARIOUS TERMS USED CONCERNING THE NEW STATE ARE ANALOGICAL OR ILLUSTRATIVE WORDS IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF FORGIVENESS IS SET FORTH

The failure to recognize this fact has been the fruitful source of much unnecessary speculation. There is one great Christian idea of forgiveness expressed under many varying terms. These terms are but thought forms and were never meant to be considered scientifically precise. No one of them, alone, could adequately set forth the idea of forgiveness as it existed in the mind of God. But one of these thought vehicles will illuminate one phase of the thought which another would not bring out at all. Professor Stevens has stated the case exactly: "Religious truth must often be conveyed in terms which reflect human relations. In such cases, we never think of regarding the forms of expression as scientific definitions. Nor do we, on the other hand, repudiate such analogical expressions as false and misleading, so long as they convey the particular truth which we wish to teach. Such terms are more concrete and realistic than the more abstract language which we should employ in efforts at precise definition." [8]

A recognition of this principle will explain the long supposed double-doctrine of Paul in regard to forgiveness. As a matter of fact, there are not two doctrines, but one, and the supposed second doctrine is really the first analogically expressed. Paul's funda-

[8] "The Theology of the New Testament," Stevens, p. 421.

mental doctrine of divine forgiveness is that which he had received as the traditional Christian doctrine, which may be traced back for its source to Christ. There can be no doubt about this. The supposed difference between Jesus and Paul has been greatly exaggerated. Paul's juridical doctrine of justification is but an illustration, in terms which are familiar to those with whom he found himself in battle, of the great Christian doctrine. Because he thus employed terms which would bring home to his hearers the central truth, are we to accuse him of being untrue to the great ethical doctrine which he had received? Not at all. He simply does that which any Christian has the right to do. He illustrated the ethical and moral by terms which would carry his thought to the minds of those who heard him. His conception of salvation by union with Christ is an ethical salvation through and through, because it is "intensely real and personal." It is my own conviction that such is true of the whole New Testament doctrine of forgiveness and salvation. It may be illustrated under different forms, forms in which human relations are expressed, but fundamentally, it is throughout the same doctrine as that which the Apostles and the Church through them received from the Lord Himself. Alexander Campbell explains the underlying principle by which this constant misapprehension of the various analogical terms may be dissipated; hence I quote him extensively here. "Regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, etc., are frequently represented as component parts of one process: whereas, any one of these, independent of the others, gives a full representation of the subject.

Is a man regenerated? He is converted, justified, and regenerated. With some system-builders, however, regeneration is an instantaneous act, between which and conversion there is a positive, substantive interval; next comes justification; and then, in some still future time, sanctification." [9]

V. WE CANNOT CLOSE OUR STUDY OF THIS QUESTION WITHOUT A CONSIDERATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND SANCTIFICATION

We have frequently hinted at the relation, throughout our study, of the subject of forgiveness. We must note it more carefully, however, for it is just here that much of the speculation has found its root. It has been customary among many of the Protestant theologians to distinguish sharply between justification, or forgiveness, and sanctification. A clearer view of the whole subject makes it apparent that such a sharp line of differentiation cannot be drawn. Dr. Clarke evidently speaks a half-truth when he says, "Plainly, sanctification is not an event, but a process." He is speaking of the progress of the new life in the soul, and in this sense he is correct in affirming that it is a process. Viewed from the ethical standpoint, it can be nothing else. But in the New Testament, sanctification is spoken of in two senses, the religious and the ethical. Viewed from the religious standpoint, it is decidedly an event. Sanctification, as the progress of the divine life in the soul, begins with sanctification which is an event, a new religious relation to God,

9 "Millennial Harbinger, Abridged." Campbell, Vol. I, p. 502.

which is entered when one is forgiven. Manifestly, one of the weaknesses of the older theology was its differentiation between forgiveness, as a mere formal verdict of acquittal, and sanctification, or the real salvation which was the end of man's acceptance of Christ. Dr. Dale says that "remission of sins, if it stood alone, would leave us unsaved, is one of the commonplaces of Christian theology." [10] But remission of sins in its true New Testament signification does not leave us unsaved. It is a complete and adequate salvation, or it is nothing at all. And it is just here that the older theology found itself in inextricable difficulties. When a man was formally justified he was not more saved, in the sense of a complete salvation, than he was before. A recognition of the indissoluble connection between forgiveness and sanctification would have saved it from this palpable error. Forgiveness of sins is not merely preliminary to sanctification: it is sanctification, a new religious state which we enter by faith and obedience; it is the beginning of that progress of the divine life in the soul toward perfection.

That the state of sanctification which we enter in receiving forgiveness is not moral perfection is experimentally known. The desire to sin is still with us; there are even occasional lapses into transgression, though the spirit desires only righteousness. Dr. Denney defines the precise meaning of sanctification, when it is considered as forgiveness, in his discussion of the meaning of the word ἁγιάζειν in the book of Hebrews. "The people were sanctified, not when they were raised to moral perfection,—a conception utterly strange to

[10] "The Atonement," Dale, p. 336.

the New Testament as to the Old,—but when, through the annulling of their sin by sacrifice, they had been constituted into a people of God, and in the person of their representative had access to His presence. The word ἁγιάζειν, in short, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, corresponds as nearly as possible to the Pauline δίκαιοῦν; the sanctification of the one writer is the justification of the other, and the προσαγωγή or access to God, which Paul emphasizes as the primary blessing of justification (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12), appears everywhere in Hebrews as the primary religious act of 'drawing near' to God, through the great High Priest (Hebrews 4:16; 7:19-25; 10:22). It seems fair, then, to argue that the immediate effect of Christ's death is religious rather than ethical. In technical language, it alters their relation to God, or is conceived as doing so, rather than their character. Their character, too, alters eventually, but it is on the basis of that primary and religious act; the religious change is not a result of a moral one, nor an unreal abstraction from it."[11] Professor Denney's clearly correct position here may be illustrated by a consideration of the difference between state and character. Too often these are confounded. Alexander Campbell splendidly illustrates the difference. "Childhood is a state; so is manhood. Now a person in a state of childhood may act, sometimes, like a person in a state of manhood; and those arrived at a state of manhood may, in character or behavior, resemble those in a state of childhood. A person in the state of a son may have the character of a servant; and a person in the

11 "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 160.

state of a servant may have the character of a son. Parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, are terms denoting relations or states. To act in accordance with these states or relations is quite a different thing from being in any of these states. Many persons enter into a state of matrimony and yet act unworthily of it." [12] Thus it is that through forgiveness a sinner may enter into a new relationship with God,—that of sonship,—and yet there has not immediately been a great change in his character. He is sanctified in the sense that he is now set apart to the service of God; he has entered, by faith, into a new and wondrous relationship.

The whole matter may be summed up in one sentence: the sanctification which results from forgiveness is a new religious state or attitude to God, out of which the ethical transformation or sanctification grows. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this fact. It is clearly the teaching of the New Testament writers. We may again quote Alexander Campbell, as he considers the relation between forgiveness and sanctification: "But these terms represent a state and not character, or an influence which state has upon character, which makes the state of immense importance from the moral and religious point of view. Indeed, the strongest arguments which the Apostles use with the Christians, to urge them forward in the cultivation and display of all the moral and religious excellencies of character, are drawn from the meaning and value of the state in which they are placed. Because forgiven, they should forgive; be-

[12] "Millennial Harbinger, Abridged," Campbell, Vol. I, p. 518.

cause justified, they should live righteously; because sanctified, they should walk holily and unblameably; because reconciled to God, they should cultivate peace with all men and act benevolently toward all; because adopted, they should walk in the dignity and purity of the sons of God; because saved, they should abound in thanksgivings, praises, and rejoicings, living soberly, righteously, and godly, looking forward to the blessed hope." [13] In a word, it is in this new state as forgiven, therefore, as Christians, that we are surrounded by all those means of grace through which the knowledge of the will of the Father is more perfectly ours, those influences through which the love of God is more clearly made known to our needy souls. The progress of the new and divine life is possible because of the new and glorious state into which, through the forgiveness in Christ, we have come. Such, in all its simplicity and beauty, is the teaching of the New Testament on the relation between the act of forgiveness and the new life of sanctification which must be ours because of it. The salvation is real and actual; it is, indeed, a complete and perfect redemption in Him.

The relationship is even more beautifully set forth when we consider the regenerating and sanctifying effects of forgiveness itself. This is something which is beyond the realm of the speculative; it is an experience realizable in human life. Dr. Denney, in his last great work, has not overstated this as a fact when he says, "Reconciliation to God comes through God's forgiveness of that by which we have been estranged from

13 "Millennial Harbinger, Abridged," Campbell, Vol. I, p. 518.

Him; and of all experiences in the religion of sinful men it is the most deeply felt and far-reaching. We do not here have to measure what is or what is not within its power; but every one who knows what it is to be forgiven knows, also, that forgiveness is the greatest regenerative force in the life of man." [14] The sense of debt to the one who thus forgives is evoked by the very act itself, and from it, as foundation, he builds the character, sanctified and holy. From this beginning the process toward the pure and holy life goes on joyfully.

The reason for the regenerating power of forgiveness, in the Christian acceptance of the term, is to be found in the fact that "the only forgiveness Jesus recognizes is that which makes the forgiven heart the home of the love which forgives; in other words, that by which a man is born again the child of God. Hence, forgiveness or reconciliation is, in a strict sense, everything in the Christian religion. It does not need to be eked out with something else. God trusts to it, to keep the sinner right with Him, just as we ourselves trust when we forgive. The child whom his father or mother pardons through pain cannot but be good while the sense of this forgiveness rests upon his heart, and it is this simple principle upon which the whole New Testament rests. True forgiveness regenerates. Justification is the power which sanctifies. This truth, which we can verify in our forgiveness of one another daily, is the ultimate and fundamental truth of the Gospel." [15] It is not too much to say that in one sense

[14] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, p. 6.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

forgiveness stands related to the new and holy life, as cause to effect. Out of the experience of forgiveness, and because of the debt we owe to Him who in His love has pardoned our sins, we grow the life that is hidden with Christ in God.

CHAPTER II

THE GROUND OF FORGIVENESS

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

If Jesus did not actually utter these words, as certain scholars claim, there can still be no doubt that He is set forth by John as giving expression to a New Testament idea. In the teaching of the New Testament from beginning to end the ground of our forgiveness is the love of God. God is love. This is the core of the revelation. He loves the sinner while He hates his sin. We have already been in contact with this sublime truth in the parable of the Lost Boy, the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of the Great Debtor. And before this we noted the preparation for this teaching in the words of the Prophets. To them Jehovah was ever a God of lovingkindness, of tender mercy and one whose desire for the salvation of His people was forever. This thought was carried over into the New Testament and there amplified in the teaching of Jesus. The position in the New Testament is that the ground of our forgiveness is the love of God, so deep and rich that it is the last reality in the universe.

But there is another strain of thought which some have found difficult to reconcile with the teaching of

Jesus: that the Father forgives freely and fully all who come to Him. It is that this forgiveness is made known through Jesus and through Him alone. To reconcile these apparently antagonistic positions will be our endeavor in this chapter.

I. THE WHOLE QUESTION RESOLVES ITSELF INTO AN INQUIRY AS TO THE PLACE OF JESUS IN GOD'S SCHEME OF FORGIVENESS

We referred to this question casually in our previous discussion; in this study we will devote ourselves to it alone. It is to be noted that such an inquiry never addressed itself to the minds of our fathers. They never at any time had doubt about the place of Jesus in the plan of things by which the Father graciously vouchsafes forgiveness unto His erring children. To them there was no forgiveness apart from Jesus. God's love was the ground of that forgiveness, yet they knew nothing of that love save as it was manifest in the life and work and death of Jesus. The message which won them to allegiance to their Master was a message of His death for sin and His resurrection unto justification. It was not an etherial gospel, divorced from the foundational facts as they are recorded in the New Testament, which made them Christians; it was a gospel in which Jesus had done something on the Cross without which forgiveness would have been an impossible and incredible thing—a death which, even though they could not explain it, had yet made such a difference in the relationship between man and God that the Father could truly forgive. In a word, the

undeniable faith of our fathers was the faith that God has forgiven us for Christ's sake.

During the last two generations, however, there has come about a change so momentous that it actually effects all this and makes a re-study of the whole scheme of forgiveness necessary. A school has arisen which, while cordially recognizing the fact that the ground of forgiveness is the love of God, yet denies that it is necessary that such love needs an intermediary through whom it can manifest itself in gracious, forgiving power. The faith of the whole church has been ruthlessly thrust aside, and not in the way of ostensibly repudiating Christianity but in the avowed way of its purification. The inquiry takes the following direction: Christianity is a stream. It begins in a clear, crystal spring of truth. It tumbles down the rugged mountainsides of Judæa into the great Roman world. As it rolls onward in its first turbulent years, it rapidly grows and into it flow other streams, discoloring its clear waters. The years pass and the once clear stream has now become a mighty river carrying within its muddy waters the truth, but strangely mixed with the multifold errors which a thousand influences of the years have brought. Christianity must be purified and reformed. To bring about this happy result it is necessary to go back to its source. The older Protestant Theologians would have heartily agreed with this and they would have placed the source of the faith in the New Testament. But the new Theologian who holds this view does not stop at the New Testament period. To purify Christianity it is necessary to go into the New Testament itself and cast out of it those elements

which cannot be found in the teaching of Jesus. In a word, it is to go back to the authority of Jesus as it is found in the Gospels. We must not only purify and reform the structure of Christianity; we must purify and reform the New Testament. Thus, in thrusting Jesus out of the place which the unanimous assent of the New Testament writers accord to Him, they appeal to the authority of Jesus Himself. Harnack has most clearly set forth this whole position in his affirmation that in the Gospel the Son really has no place at all but only the Father. Thus, in the last two generations, the place of Jesus in the Gospel, and consequently in the very heart-proposition of the Gospel, the forgiveness of sins, has not only been questioned, but denied altogether.

A more exhaustive consideration of this widely prevalent attitude is here imperative in our study of the ground of forgiveness. Those who advocate it hold, in brief, that there are two Gospels in the New Testament, not one. These they denominate the Gospel of Paul and the Gospel of Jesus. The Gospel of Jesus is the Gospel within the Gospel. These Gospels, however, are in direct antithesis, the one resting on the authority of Paul, the other taking its root in the teaching of Jesus Himself. We must go through the Gospel of Paul and recover the Gospel of Jesus. The Gospel of Paul is that which we have noted as the Gospel of our fathers, the Gospel of the Church through the years and the Gospel of the Church in the glory of the Apostolic days. Instead of the Son having no place, but only the Father, in the Gospel as believed and taught by the Apostles and early Christians, the Son

bulks so large that He fills all things. He is not only the pattern believer, He is the object of faith, the one on whom we are ready to throw ourselves in loving trust. The Gospel of Jesus, the one preached by Jesus, and the one to which we must find our way as the true source of the Christian religion, is one in which the Master taught men to trust in God through all the temptations, vicissitudes, and agonies of life, to believe in fellowman and the love of the Father. Jesus is the first Christian, the first martyr to a glorious cause. He believed in immortality; we should also believe in immortality. The best designation of His office is that of teacher. He is not Saviour in the sense that anything He did is efficacious in our salvation; He can be called Saviour only in the sense that He saves us from ourselves and from the wrong ideas of life by teaching us the true way. He saves us by His philosophy of life; His belief in God, in which he teaches us to share. It is evident that these two so-called Gospels are in antithesis. If Jesus is only our teacher, the pattern believer, then the Gospel of Paul is an absurd invention; if Jesus is Saviour then the so-called Gospel which owes its being to Him is inadequate. It is interesting that Harnack, though he holds the view of the two Gospels antithetical to each other, nevertheless affirms that this double Gospel, as it is set forth in the New Testament, is just as necessary at the present day as it has been necessary in all the periods of the past.[1] But if the two Gospels be acknowledged it is difficult to understand how one holding this view can overlook

[1] "The Two-fold Gospel in the New Testament," a lecture by Adolph Harnack, D.D. (Williams and Norgate).

the evident schism created in the New Testament. There can be but little doubt that the differences between Paul and Jesus have been greatly exaggerated. Those differences are more apparent than real. But to this we will recur later.

That the so-called Gospel of Paul is the Gospel of the New Testament must be patent to even a casual reader. Paul speaks glowingly of the mighty ground of forgiveness and also of the manner in which that forgiving love manifests itself when he writes to the Romans, "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God sent forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:24-25). All that is blessing from the Father is ours because we are His, and of Him, who is the Lord, for "of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). The redemption which we thus enjoy is ours because of something accomplished when He shed His blood upon the tree. This act is also the manifestation of the grace or love which was His for the sinner and it is this which causes the Apostle to exult "in the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon

the earth" (Eph. 1:6-10). It would be difficult to frame a sentence which would give to Christ a loftier place in the whole divine scheme of things. But Paul further affirms directly that forgiveness is mediated through Christ, when, exhorting the Ephesians, he writes, "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). He reminds the Corinthians of their former terrible state in which they were alienated from the Kingdom of God and of the debt they now owe to the Father for "such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God" (I Cor. 5:11). Here the justification or forgiveness of the Father is given through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The so-called Pauline Gospel goes further in its affirmations regarding the place of Jesus in the plan of forgiveness. It is not only in the name of Jesus that the sinner is forgiven, but it is because of what the Lord has done specifically in His death upon the cross. In his classic peroration in the eighth chapter of the Roman letter Paul's whole position as to Christ's place in God's forgiving love is eloquently set forth. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth (or forgiveth); who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who

also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:31-35). Here the love of God is identified with the love of Christ. It is through the sacrificial love of Christ that we know of the forgiving love of the Father. Since God has forgiven us in Christ there is none who can condemn. The state of the forgiven is secure; nothing shall be able to separate him from that mighty love which is the ground of his forgiveness and which was manifest in what it did in Christ. The Apostle then proceeds with his rhapsody, "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-38). We may feel that Paul was mistaken in this attitude; we may assure ourselves that his thinking concerning Christ had caused him to accord to Him a position out of all proportion to that which His life and death and teaching by right could give Him, but that in his gospel Christ was all in all, the manifestation of the love of the Father in such degree that without Him that love could not be known; this we cannot successfully deny.

There are two more mighty statements of Paul which must be considered in any study of just the place which Jesus occupied in His Gospel. The first one is the familiar word in the fifth chapter of Romans. He has been talking about our justification through faith, and

it is but the logical thing to proceed from this to that ground of our forgiveness which makes our human response, in faith, possible. "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for the good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8). Through the death of Christ, God's own forgiving love has been made known. He loved us before this act, it was because of such love that He could endure it: it is through such an act that His forgiving love is commended to us. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:9-11). By His blood we are forgiven. By something which He accomplished on the cross we have come into a new state in which there is forgiveness and in which we are secure. Once forgiven by His blood, by our appropriation of its merits to our souls, we are sanctified by the teachings of His life, by that growth in the soul which brings us onward toward perfection. Our joy is in the Father, in His wondrous love, from which we cannot be separated but which we know only through the Lord Jesus Christ, for through Him has come reconciliation as a gift of forgiving love. The position is so unmistakable that it requires no further elucidation.

The second great passage in which Paul's so-called Gospel is strikingly set forth occurs in his Colossian letter. "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1 : 19-22). These words but reaffirm the position with which we have been in contact in all the other passages which set forth Paul's Gospel. God's forgiving love is vouchsafed in Christ; it is not known save as it is realized in what the Master did in His life and particularly in his sacrificial death.

There is one further statement of Paul which not only expresses what he thought of the place of Jesus in God's plan of forgiveness, but one also in which he is definitely in line with the great teaching of the Master in the parable of the lost sheep. This is the well-known statement in the second letter to the Corinthians in which he says, "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5 : 18-19). Here the forgiving love of God is a seeking love. The Father takes the initiative and bears the cost in our salvation. And can we think of seeking love in the abstract sense? Can we think of a forgiving love,

which seeks us, apart from some definite and lovable manifestation of that love? These are lofty heights to which Paul carries us, but they are heights not unfamiliar to us, for Jesus has taken us there before when he tells us of the loving shepherd who braved the storms and mountain torrents that he might bring back his own. It is the grandest conception of God's love to which the mind can attain, that one caught up into the cadences of a Christian Hymn loved round the world.

"Lord, thou hast here thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for thee?
But the shepherd made answer,
One of mine has wandered away from me,
And although the road be rough and steep
I go to the desert to find my sheep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep.

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night,
That the Lord passed through,
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard its cry,
Sick and helpless and ready to die,
Sick and helpless and ready to die."

It is to be noted in considering the so-called Gospel of Paul that it is not only his, but as we have before stated, it is the Gospel of the Apostolic church, the Gospel of the New Testament. No matter where we turn in the epistolatory writings we are in contact with

it. We may say that this is all due to the mighty influence of Paul, but somehow this fails to satisfy us. We cannot but ask how men with such profound faith as we know the early disciples possessed could be so quickly shaken from their earliest convictions if they were different from those which they so often and so confidently express. The writer of the Hebrew letter speaks exultingly and his message is Pauline, i.e., it is in line with Paul's great position. "God having of old time spoken unto the father in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3). The method of God's speaking to men is here emphasized; His address through great personalities, the manifestation of Himself through men. And this is precisely what Paul has affirmed when he thinks of God's forgiving love; it is demonstrated in a realizable manner in His own Son.

If we turn to the other types of New Testament doctrine we find ourselves in the same circle of ideas; the circle in which the whole Christian community was at home and with which all were familiar. If we turn to the Johannine type we may read, "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him" (I John 4:9). There is here no direct reference to forgiveness through Christ, but rather

to that which ever results from forgiveness. But the writer continues, and then we see that the love which he knows is that which is focused in Christ's death, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4: 10).

The Petrine Gospel is in line with the other types of doctrine as to the place of Jesus in the scheme of forgiveness. There are two great passages in the First Epistle of Peter which set forth Christ's place as we have found it in all our study. In his exhortation to holy living the writer reminds those to whom he writes that the cost of their redemption has been dear. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God" (I Pet. 1: 18-21). The Apostle here emphasizes the thought that the very belief which the disciples had in God was due to Christ, to the fact that God had raised him from the dead. The redemption which is their prized possession was not purchased save at the cost of the precious blood of the lamb. One who could write such words would never be accused of being a believer in an abstract love of God which has never taken form save in a teacher of righteousness. To the mind of the writer of this Epistle, what Jesus

did on the cross has made a profound difference in the relations between God and man. To him also the manifestation of the Fatherly heart was a matter foreknown, it was part of the Father's plan and was accomplished according to that plan at the right moment.

There is one other Petrine statement which completes his Gospel. The Apostle is exhorting the disciples to patience in suffering. Christ has suffered for us and set us an example that we should follow in His steps. It is in this connection that he gives expression to the great New Testament truth that Jesus "bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (I Pet. 2:24). In His death He has so dealt with sin that it is no longer a barrier to our life of righteousness. And when he says this, he means that because of this God has forgiven. If sin no longer is ours, if it has been borne by him, then the Father has forgiven it, He no longer holds it against us. That we as Christians are thus restored to the normal relations in the home of our Father is expressed in words which themselves are evidently an echo of the parable of the lost sheep, "For ye were going away like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Pet. 2:25).

There are several objections which have been advanced against the Gospel of Paul and in favor of the so-called Gospel as preached by Jesus. These objections are supposed to be of such strength as to forever make impossible further belief in the historic position of the Church. We will but note them here and later will consider them more in detail.

(1) It is objected that the Gospel of Paul rests upon the position that the New Testament is a unity, and that since it is forever impossible to discover just what that unity is, the Gospel itself must remain somewhat in the shadow. There can be no doubt but that it is true that the New Testament books were never written with the idea of being bound together in one volume. They are but fragments of a literature which must have been infinitely larger than the books we now possess. In a word, the unity which the books now possess is not inherent, it is factitious, artificial. We have thought of them as a unity only because of the action of the Church in bestowing upon them canonical authority. The age to which these books belong was the one in which the Church had no New Testament. They are of value, therefore, in being a guide to the manner in which the early Christians thought before there was a New Testament, but since they are fragmentary they cannot be authoritative for us for a doctrine so final as that God mediates forgiveness to us only through the person of Jesus Christ.

(2) A second objection, and one urged with greater force, is the one which we have already considered briefly in the former chapter, that this Gospel of Paul contradicts the teaching of Jesus in his parable of the prodigal son. Here God is shown to forgive freely and fully. He does it because he loves the son. The son has done nothing at all to placate the Father. All that was necessary for him to do to be received was to leave the swine and return in penitent spirit to the home of his Father. Now a gospel which makes necessary the life and death of Jesus before this forgiveness can be

extended is evidently in direct antithesis to this teaching.

(3) A third reaction against the Gospel of Paul is philosophical in nature. How can events in time have eternal significance? Jesus lived a human life. He was a human being in every sense of the term and His life and teachings were conditioned by events which are indissolubly connected with the time series. As the centuries roll on these events will become more and more shadowy and their meaning for us must decrease with this passage of the years. Christianity, therefore, to live must be divorced from the historic Jesus. It must be restated in a system of ideas which transcend time and the events in time. It must be independent of the facts, so-called, of the Gospel. But the Gospel of Paul and the Church is connected with the life and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The first appeal this Gospel makes is that of a theory derived from these mighty facts which are alleged to have taken place in Palestine. If the facts are removed the basis for the Gospel disappears. Hence, if the facts can be shown to be spurious there is no Gospel. It cannot, therefore, be an eternal Gospel if it rests upon such a flimsy basis.

(4) The fourth objection is implicit in the other three, namely: that the love and reverence of the disciples of Christ for their Lord caused them to give Him a place in the whole plan which He does not deserve. He was but a teacher of God; they have made Him God Himself.

The conclusion from these objections is, then, that we must abandon, or, perhaps, to revert to the figure

which we employed earlier in the discussion, we must go through all this invented position to the true Gospel, which is the Gospel preached by Jesus Himself and which we have recorded in the Gospels, or in the source of our present Gospels whatever that may have been. Let us ruthlessly cut through all the incrustations of the centuries; let us resolutely cast aside the rubbish which has been collecting through all the years, and let us rediscover Jesus, let us find again the peasant of Galilee; let us return to His simple teaching of love to God and man.

But before we do this too speedily let us take account of some of the limitations and imperfections of this attitude which are readily manifest when the whole matter is sifted carefully. There are some things involved in any such return to the so-called Gospel of Jesus which we may not be ready to countenance.

(1) Not least among these objections is the fact that such a position sweeps away the convictions and faith of the Apostolic Church. It is but one step farther to say that it sweeps away the New Testament. It is a matter not requiring proof that the Gospel of Paul is the New Testament Gospel. The Christ whose sacrificial death has made a difference in the relations between man and God is the theme of the New Testament from beginning to end. It is not the simple teacher of Galilee who caught the imagination of the early disciples but the Christ of God; the Christ so uniquely the Son of God that they accord to Him the worship which before they had given to the Father alone. To them He was all in all. Now we may be afflicted with the obsession that everything old is

necessarily wrong. We may feel that because a thing belongs to the past it can have no validity for us now. In a word, we may throw the New Testament lightly away. That this can be done is evidenced by the fact that it is constantly being done and in the name of the purification of the Gospel itself. But it is open to serious question whether we can still call ourselves Christian at all if we have abandoned that ground which was indisputably the only Christian ground known to the New Testament community. Professor Paterson very kindly speaks of those who hold this so-called Gospel of Jesus as having a diluted or attenuated form of Christianity. But when we deny the validity of that which every one knows was the foundation of all the early Christians believed and hoped for, can we still claim that we have any Christianity left? It would be probably nearer the truth, though not so kind perhaps, to say that the so-called Gospel of Jesus is a religion, a new religion, but it is not Christianity, since it has discarded that which gave foundation, form, and direction to the Christianity of the early Church. The whole question resolves itself into an inquiry into the mooted matter of authority in religion. What is the rule of faith? Shall we go to the Church, the Infallible Book, the Inner Light or to reason? I do not believe there can be any question as to the authority in religion. If we are talking of religion in the large it must be certain that the reason must be the authority. We must accept as true or reject as false in accordance with our reason. But authority in Christianity is a different matter. If we ask, "What is the form or standard for Christian doctrine"—then, we

are in a different realm altogether. We cannot cast aside as so much trash those documents which from the earliest times have been considered authoritative by all men who love Christ as Lord. And this very thing, without contradiction, the so-called Gospel of Jesus does. We cannot so easily sever all connections with the past. "If we take out of what is, what has been, how much will we have left?"

(2) The objection that since the forgiveness of the Father is mediated through Jesus it contradicts the teaching of the Lord in the parable of the prodigal son, is not well founded. It is more formidable on first sight than after a deeper probing. One is compelled to ask immediately just how much of the love of God would he know without Jesus. Is it only that Jesus teaches us to love God? Is it that He merely tells us of God as a loving Father and that because He loves us as a Father we ought to love Him as obedient and loving children? Are we indebted to Him in our knowledge of the love of God only as a student is indebted to a teacher? There is something about such an attitude which fails to satisfy. It is assuming too much to think or to say that the parable of the prodigal boy is meant to teach all the Saviour would reveal about the love of God. We have already noted that there is one vital element in that love, developed in the teaching of Jesus as a whole on the subject, which is entirely lacking—that of the seeking love of God. Would we not be justified in saying that since in the one the Master teaches that the Father fully and freely forgives all who come to Him that He is inconsistent when He teaches, in the story

of the lost sheep, that God takes the initiative and goes after us? How is it that He is seeking us and yet that we must come to Him if we would have His forgiveness. No one would for a moment affirm that any such hypothetical inconsistency has any real being. And why would it be more difficult to believe that in the person of His unique Son the Father is seeking His wandering children; that in Him He is making known to them His love in demonstration. The Father must speak a language man can understand and this very thing He does in the life and death of His Son.

It would be a rather difficult thing apart from Christ to induce the average man to believe that God is love. Most men are environed by circumstances which tend to impress them with the malevolent character of the Deity. Sickness and starvation and war on every hand. The terrors of nature with the suffering which man heaps upon man; all these things and a hundred others kindred do not make men believe that God loves them. Merely to tell men that God loves them, when they live in such a world as the one which now is our home, will not go far. But it has been done in Christ. In Christ men see for the first time a true demonstration of heavenly love. Paul runs through the whole list of things which are of the nature to make men disbelieve in the love of God and yet firmly avows that none of these, no matter how terrible they can be, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. In Christ he felt he had an assurance of God's love so tremendous, so unshakable, that nothing could ever again induce him to disbelieve in the Father, as a Father. Those experi-

ences which have broken the spirit and caused the soul to grow sick with despair were to him but the anvil on which a greater and more noble faith was beaten out. Through Christ they had a meaning divine, and in themselves were even greater evidence of the provident love of God. God is love—but let us repeat, His love is not an abstraction. An abstract love may be possible for abstract men and women, but those of flesh and blood must have a demonstration which they can comprehend. The teaching that God's love is mediated through Christ does not contradict His teaching in the parable of the prodigal son; it completes it.

(3) The objection that we cannot rest a doctrine so final as that of the forgiveness of God through Christ upon the factitious unity of the New Testament is one which need not concern us long. That, as regards the volume itself, the unity of the New Testament is arbitrary, is undeniable. There has long been a debate as to the nature of the unity which it must possess. It is not a unity in the sense that God prepared a volume for us which would be divine in every particular. I suppose none to-day would make any such argument for it. Whatever else we may say about the unity of the New Testament it is certainly not fortuitous. There is a unity, and it is not a unity made possible purely by the art of the bookbinder. Regarding the New Testament books "it would be truer to say that they gravitated toward each other in the course of the first century of the Church's life, and imposed their unity on the Christian mind, than that the Church imposed on them by statute—for when 'dogma' is used in the abstract sense which contrasts it with fact or history, that

is what it means—a unity to which they were inwardly strange. That they are at one in some essential respects is obvious. They have at least unity of subject: they are all concerned with Jesus Christ, and with the manifestation of God's redeeming love to men in Him. There is even a sense in which we may say there is a unity of authorship; for all the books of the New Testament are works of faith." [2] Surely Dr. Denney has sounded the keynote when he affirms that these books have a unity of subject. And this unity of subject is just the thing which brought them together. The subject was uppermost in the minds of the Church, it had made the Church; without it there never would have been a Christian community. Instead, therefore, of basing this final doctrine of the forgiving love of God as known in Jesus upon a so-called factitious unity of the New Testament Books, that very final doctrine itself brought the New Testament writings into existence and also collated them into a unity.

(4) The objection to the eternal significance of events in time, and thus to the basic facts of the life and teaching of Jesus out of which the Gospel grows, is one which can concern us more seriously than any of those to which we have thus far given attention. It is evident, without anything further being said on this point, that such an attitude invalidates all that has been accepted as foundational in Christianity. All we have known as Christianity is founded upon definite events which have transpired in time. Take these away from us and we feel lost; there is no firm ground for our feet.

2 "The Death of Christ," Denney, pp. 1, 2.

The story of the gradual exclusion of Jesus from the Christian religion is too long for careful consideration here. Suffice it to say, that it began with a whittling away process until at last the outlines of the Master were so dim and shadowy that even the most radical of the new School were dissatisfied. We can really know nothing definite about Jesus. Even the record in Mark is so fragmentary and unsatisfactory and the problems it presents are so varied and baffling that we can never come to a true understanding of what He was. Let us, therefore, cut loose from the historical altogether and rise above it into the pure ideal of the Christian religion. Instead of the historic Jesus let us accept the ideal Christ. Let us get out from under the dead hand of the past and rise unburdened by its historical difficulties into a realm of pure idealism. Realizing that God and man are indistinguishably one, that man's life is the life of God, let us leave our sterile considerations of historical events which can never really have to do with our salvation anyway. Such an attitude is always that of the Hegelian or Neo-Hegelian School when it has to do with Christianity.

There are several manifest weaknesses in any such theory of Christianity which readily suggest themselves when one probes the matter deeply. In the first place, it is nothing more nor less than bland assumption to affirm that if Christianity is historical, if it is indissolubly linked with the time series, it cannot be final. And this very assumption is made. In popular form it states that Jesus was all right for His own day. What He taught had a validity for the time in which He lived. His teaching could satisfy the hunger of the

hearts of His day. The moral life He exemplified would admirably suit the time in which He is cabined; it does not follow that He has said anything which is valid for us now. In a word, Jesus was so limited by the fact that He was born into the life of one race, and one epoch, that He could not say anything eternal. Drews, in his study of "Christ Myths," shows great impatience with anything in the past as having vital content for religion which has a present object. Since He is captive of His own time and conditions Jesus will be dimmer and dimmer as a character as the time series roll on. Farther and farther back into the centuries He will recede until we lose sight of Him altogether. "Yet one touch of experience breaks the spell. It is found that Jesus is past only as we refuse to think of Him. Let the supreme issues be taken up in moral earnest and at once He steps forward from the page of history, a tremendous and exacting reality. We cannot read His greatest works, be they of command or promise, without feeling that He is saying these things to us now 'unter vier Augen'; that we are as much face to face with decision for or against Him as Zaccheus or Pilate. He gets home upon our conscience in a manner so final and inevitable—even when we do not wish to have anything to do with Him—that we see and know Him as present to the mind. Like any other reality He can be kept out of consciousness by the withdrawal of attention. But once He is entered, and, having entered, has shown us all things that ever we did, He moves out of the past into the field of immediate knowledge and takes the central place in the soul now and here. It is plain that at this point a living

conscience about sin is crucial. Jesus, in short, will permanently be a historical externality to the man who will not admit Him to the moral sense." [3] Thus, as theory, it might appear the only logical thing for the influence of Jesus, limited by His own time and conditions, to be an ever-decreasing influence, but this theory goes to pieces on the rocks of experience. Instead of a diminishing influence He is an ever-increasing influence and power in the world.

The objection to the eternal significance of the events of Christ's life, and death, and resurrection, also rests upon a false view of history as such. Those who hold this view generally consider history as a lantern-screen upon which there is constantly being thrown the pictures of facts which are independently real. As such, therefore, history has no real being at all. But it is far more correct to say that it is "rather a workshop and laboratory in which fact itself comes to be." With this view of it, we can understand why it is that the history of religion has been one long series of great personalities. In other words, God through men, in the field of history, has been bringing great things to pass. But it has been through men. It has not been through systems of ideas, abstract in nature and abstractly mediated, but through great truths incarnate in great souls. This has been the manner of revelation always. Thus great ideas have risen to conquering power in a Luther, a Wesley, a Calvin and from their labors have gone forward the greatest and most glorious movements for God. How clearly has Professor Mackintosh stated it: "One of the really im-

[3] "Aspects of Christian Belief," H. R. Mackintosh, p. 13.

portant truths to which religious people have wakened up, freshly and eagerly, in the last hundred years is this, that God never reveals Himself to men by fostering in their minds the acceptance of certain theological propositions which can be got by heart and understood by the detached onlooker; He reveals Himself through facts of history, and above all through great personalities and their spiritual experience." [4] How much of the Bible deals with the histories of great men? Take out Abraham, Moses, Saul, Paul, Peter, etc., not to mention the Master Himself, and how much have you left? It is one prolonged record of human life and the revelation of God in that life, of human experiences and adventures in faith.

It is surely unnecessary to inquire for the reason why this method has always been employed. How many would be saved if they were forced to think their way through the mazes of abstract spiritual thought. Even those most profound in their thought processes are more influenced by truth in personality than in any other manner. We can understand truth divine when we see it in the lives of men around us. When God so speaks to us He uses an intelligible language. With this method we are familiar in our everyday lives. Courage and patience and love are revealed to us constantly through friends and loved ones. It is not at all strange then that when God would reveal His greatest love, His forgiving grace, that He should use a method which men could understand because one with which they are familiar.

There is one other aspect of this whole question

[4] "The Divine Initiative," H. R. Mackintosh, p. 41.

without at least a casual notice of which this inquiry would be incomplete. It is philosophical in nature and lies right at the basis of the matter. Just what is God's relation to man after all? Is it static, immutable, or can it be expressed in personal categories? To put it in other words, Is reality complete, frozen, unchangeable in its content, or is it dynamic or kinetic? Is there possibility of an increase in it, or is history merely a silver screen upon which we are daily seeing the pictures of those realities which can never be increased since they are fixed and final? We cannot blink the fact that if we are to interpret history as a field in which God is bringing great things to be, then we must believe that there is possibility of an increase in the content of reality, that it is not frozen and fixed forever. Yea, more, in Jesus Christ we find that very increase in moral and spiritual reality. Professor Mackintosh asks and answers the question in his usual brilliant manner. "Has the cross any casual bearing—not on the originative and fontal love of God, but—on His present gracious attitude to the guilty? Or shall we apply also at this point the monistic principle that nothing real ever moves, that all happenings are ipso facto appearance and not reality? To me it seems that if history is the fruitful sphere and nidus of being, if it is this, and not merely an earthly representation and picturing of eternal truths—of validities, that is, which hold good irrespectively of all that may become in time and space—then we are obliged to think of salvation as deriving reality, acquiring substantial and effective existence, through concrete events in time. Christ, that is, does more than unveil a relation already

posited by the definition of Divinity and Humanity; He once for all develops a new relation at great cost. True, this argument is worthless if God is not in fact antagonistic to sin, if, because He is love unspeakable, He cannot be wrath as well. But to say so is to disregard the voice of the instructed Christian conscience, which tells us plainly that we question God's anger at sin only because we are so little angry at it ourselves." It is not too much to say that the Christian attitude must be that salvation is of such nature that it can come through history, nay, that it must come in this manner, and that it could not possibly come in any other. Salvation is of such nature that it can only come from within, it could not be imposed upon man from above and when we say this we acknowledge all that the facts of the Gospel may mean. Jesus was God working within the race of men, by life, and death, and resurrection, not only disclosing the forgiving love of the Father; not alone making known God's relation to the sinful, but actually making a change in that relation. This is what we mean when we say that the events of Christianity can and do have eternal significance. It is the only manner in which divine truth has ever had such significance for man because the only manner of revelation which he can understand. Divorce Christianity from its basic facts and it is difficult to see how what remains could still be called Christianity.

(5) There is one other objection to the so-called Gospel of Jesus as opposed to the Gospel of Paul which can be noted here in but two or three sentences. It deserves a far more careful exposition. The theory

sweeps away the self-consciousness of Jesus concerning His mission in the world. The claim that the worship of Jesus arose subsequent to His death and resurrection is not well founded, for all the way through the Gospels we are in contact with this same attitude toward Him. And there is evidence, which is beyond doubt, that Jesus Himself accepted this attitude on the part of His disciples. Professor Denney [5] has made a powerful argument, and in my own way of looking at it an unanswerable one for this self-consciousness of our Lord. In a word, he contends that Jesus accepted this attitude toward Himself as Christ and Lord and commended it. Not only so, but He thought Himself to be the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, the King of Israel. Those who advocate the so-called Gospel of Jesus fail to account for all the facts. While He does teach us to love God and to believe in the after life, He also teaches us to believe in Himself as one who is uniquely the Son of the Father. Can we accept one side of His teaching and ignore the other? Even if it should be admitted that Jesus did not claim for Himself this unique position; yet He won and accepted it for Himself. Had the disciples been mistaken in it surely the candor of our Lord would have forced Him to rebuke them. He did this on other occasions. He did not allow them to hold false views on other things without telling them of their error and warning them against it: would He have left unrebuked such a faith as this had it been without basis in fact? His silence, if He were silent, on this would of itself have been approbation.

[5] See "Jesus and the Gospel," Denney.

(6) There is one more objection to the effort to thrust Jesus back into His own time and hold Him there, the prisoner of His own age. Such a view of the Gospel cuts its moral nerve. There is but one Gospel in the world now; and there has been but one through which we can evangelize; that is the one in which Christ is given the central place in God's whole scheme of forgiveness. The most damning thing which can be said against diluted Christianity is that it does not work. And those who hold it now and yet try to remain Christian are recognizing the fact that only as it can be made to work will it live. There never has been in the history of Christianity an evangelist who did not believe with all his heart and soul in the Gospel of the Son of God who died for our sins and was raised for our justification. It is only as we believe in the facts of the Gospel that we can save men, for "when we lose contact with the facts we lose the power to evangelize." To lose contact with the facts is to launch out into a new realm and to cut all connection with the great stream of believing life through all the Christian centuries. It is a matter of experience that the revelation of Christianity to our own hearts has been made through personalities, and uniquely the personality of Jesus. The New Testament is the record of that great personality and is handed on to us through the personalities of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul. And we have known of the great truths of the Gospel because of the men and women whose faith we have seen as we come into the world. A Christian mother taught us concerning the Master. A Christian teacher led us in the new paths of faith. The care and

leadership of the Church of God has made us to know Jesus. As we have known it, evangelization has gone forward through great personalities. And these who brought the word of life to us believed in Jesus as uniquely the Son of God. They did not bring us to decision through the so-called Gospel of the peasant teacher of Galilee but through the Gospel of a crucified and risen Lord whose sacrificial death upon the cross has made a place for us in the forgiving love of the Father.

There is an interesting thought in this connection which Professor Mackintosh advances with telling effect. The diluted Gospel of Jesus might satisfy this or that individual, but there is only one for a Church. There is only one upon which a Church can be built. This is to repeat what we have already been saying, for to build New Testament Churches is to evangelize. And it is significant that "you cannot erect a church which will attain any appreciable success in building the Kingdom of God on earth, throughout the long generations anywhere, save on the basis of faith in the crucified and risen Lord. Christian history makes that fairly clear." [6] Most men will acknowledge this to be true, but some will ask, "Why then is it that there are individuals who seemingly are successful and satisfied with the more attentuated Gospel?" There are such, and they have even banded themselves together into societies which they call churches, who do not accord to Jesus the place which the New Testament and the believing love of the Church has given him and they seem to get along well in their Christian lives. Grant

[6] "The Divine Initiative," Mackintosh, p. 94.

this to the full; but would they do this if they were not surrounded by more healthy and dynamic forms of faith? Is there record of any such so-called Church being builded in a place where no other form of Christianity has ever been known? Has any such body ever gone out into the untracked jungle, among the child races of the world, and builded a house for God? Only under such conditions as these could any real test be made. It is suggestive, at least, that such diluted forms of Christianity have persisted only where they were surrounded by a virile faith. "Their experience is all the time being fed from larger and deeper springs outside themselves; impulses and energies accrue to them from the corporate whole; they find daily in their associates more striking instances of brave belief and therefore better reasons for believing; the atmosphere of a more abundant life is around them as something they breathe and assimilate." [7]

The knowledge which we ourselves have had of the forgiving love of God, the joy which has come to us because we have experienced it, is ours because we have known the Church which is a body of men and women banded together for God and His Son, because they have been forgiven. It is notable that those who hold the attenuated Gospel think but little of God's forgiveness because they, too, often have had little concern about the necessity for it. Generally a declining faith in Christ has gone hand in hand with a declining sense of the sinfulness of sin. We would not imply that those who hold this view are not often good men, but it is not going beyond the bounds of caution to say

[7] "The Divine Initiative," Mackintosh, p. 94.

that they explain the presence of sin in the world in other ways than those given in the Revelation. They have not only diluted the teaching concerning Christ; they have also diluted that concerning sin. But it is true, and this surely has foundational bearing upon the whole matter of evangelism, that we know of that which the Gospel universally teaches to be the most precious possession of the Christian man—the forgiveness of the Father, only as we have known it through forgiven men. "No man has ever reached this amazing conviction of the Father's pardon in Christ or perceived it to be the most blessed and emancipating thing in the world except by living beside those who themselves were forgiven, and who let him see it."

(7) There is yet one other objection which in itself is of such character that it destroys the effectiveness of any argument which can be made in favor of this attentuated Gospel. This is to be found in the fact that it makes no place for what Dr. Mackintosh calls "The Divine Initiative." We have already discovered that the setting forth of the love of God in the parable of the prodigal son is incomplete without that of the lost sheep. It is a glorious revelation to the hungry heart that God loves the sinner, and that He is anxiously awaiting his return to filial fellowship and to the protecting care of the Father's house. This goes far beyond anything man had clearly known before the coming of the Master to the world. And it is this that He reveals; we know it because we know Him. This has been our argument all the way through. But this is not all He reveals. He goes on, in the parable which

we have just noted, to reveal the still more glorious fact that not only does God want us to repent; not only is He ready to freely and fully forgive us; but greater still He is actually in the world now seeking us that He may bring us to salvation. The greatest heights to which Jesus conducts us in the revelation of the forgiving love of God are those in which He makes known the fact that the Father takes the initiative in our salvation and bears the cost of it. And this He does in the person of Jesus. Jesus is the demonstration of the divine initiative. God is here, personally to lead us in the way of life. But this sublime truth is entirely left out in the so-called Gospel of Jesus. There can be no room for it if the Lord is only a teacher of righteousness. It is too often true that those who hold this view are more interested in man's search for God than in God's search for man. That man is hunting for God always is admitted, but the distinctive thing about Christianity is the teaching that God is everywhere hunting for man, at every step originating religion, taking the first step that we may take the second. And it is this we see in Jesus or we do not see Him at all. What else could one see in the Cross than the love of the Father which would go to the farthest extremity to bring back the wandering son?

We cannot but come once more to the question before we have done with this study, "If we reject all that has been accepted as Christian, all that has worn the name of Christian, all that has been considered in New Testament times and from those times until the present hour as Christian, can we justly claim to stand on Christian ground?" We have already considered

the fact that to accept the diluted so-called Christianity which places Jesus in the same position as it would accord to other teachers like Socrates, Buddha, or Mohammed, is in reality to throw the New Testament away altogether. When those who do this in the name of its purging and for the purpose of reforming Christianity get through with their task they are confronted with the not at all comforting fact that they have no Christianity left to reform. If we then cast away the New Testament and dethrone the Christ, can we call the poor remnant, which remains to us in the so-called ideal Christianity, Christian at all? It seems to me that we are face to face with these alternatives: either Christianity as it is revealed in the Christ and the New Testament or a new religion. And if we are to have a new religion let us also have the courage to call it so; let us not misname it Christian when it has lost all vital connection with that which has by right worn the name. That this is not likely to be done is evidenced by the fact that with every opportunity to do so it has accomplished so little. The Church of Christ, on the other hand, continues to go forward joyfully and by leaps and bounds in her work of saving men, and her message is that of the forgiving love of God as demonstrated in the life and death and resurrection of His holy Son Jesus.

CHAPTER III

THE APPROPRIATION OF FORGIVENESS

"But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:4-9).

In the last chapter we devoted ourselves to a study of the ground of our forgiveness. In these words of Paul we note his affirmation that God's grace has been made known unto us; that this manifestation has been made in Christ Jesus who is the Father's love objectified. We have already discovered that apart from such tangible manifestation we do not know the Father's love. Without Christ we find that we have no hold on God. The whole study revolved around the part which God takes in our salvation. We noted that in salvation He takes the initiative; He is actually seeking men, and in the seeking shuns not to take upon Himself the awful cost of their salvation. In our present study we wish to consider man's part, the human response to what God has done in Christ. In

the verses above, Paul says that that response is through faith. By grace are we saved, but it is through faith. "Faith and grace are thus correlative terms and are the pivots of Paul's whole teaching. Grace is the principle in God which initiates and completes the work of salvation; and faith is the act in which man appropriates it." [1] Professor Stevens has thus presented clearly our present program of study. I am not sure that I can go with him when he talks about faith as "the act" in which we appropriate forgiveness. More of this later. His statement of the manner in which we know the grace of the Father, and make what that grace has made possible our own, is indisputable. It is to this side of it, our part, that we wish to direct our thinking for this hour.

I. IT IS THE UNIVERSAL NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING THAT THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS IS APPROPRIATED THROUGH FAITH

The grace of God, as we have already discovered, is the foundation upon which our forgiveness is based—it is the fountain out of which that forgiveness flows like a healing stream to the sinful soul, but through faith we take all its healing power into our hearts. "Grace is the free and undeserved kindness of God which freely gives us what we need; and faith is the free and active acceptance of that which grace presents. Free grace is the source of salvation, and faith receiving the gift is the means of salvation to us." [2]

It is the familiar teaching of Paul that we are jus-

[1] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, pp. 261, 262.
[2] "An Outline of Christian Theology," W. N. Clarke, p. 404.

tified or forgiven by faith. Many passages come readily to mind. To the Romans he writes, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2). It would be difficult to frame a sentence in which the place of Christ could stand out in greater emphasis. It is through Christ that we have peace with God, it is through Him that we have justification, and it is through our faith in Him that we have thus been brought into all the blessings which the grace of God has so freely and fully made possible for us. In his vigorous protest against the teaching that one could be saved by an observance of the law, he reminds the Galatians that they have not been thus justified, and that they have no right to continue in sin, for "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law" (Gal. 2:16). In the next chapter of the same letter, he once again powerfully sets forth his position that forgiveness is mediated to us through Christ, and that through our faith in Him it is ours. "But before faith came, we were in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For we are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:23-26). Here he glow-

ingly states the two blessings which are ours as Christians because of the grace of God, and because of our faith in Christ; we are forgiven or justified, and we become Sons of God when thus we are received back into the Father's love.

In Peter's statement at the so-called Council of Jerusalem we have the work of faith stated in other terms. He reminds his brethren of his visit to the household of Cornelius at which time the Father made choice of him to bring the good news to the Gentiles. It was through his mouth that they should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And because God knew their hearts, He gave unto them the same gift as He had bestowed so freely upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And He made no distinction between the disciples and them, "cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:7-9). Here the whole process of conversion is considered as a cleansing, and the name of that whole process, from the human side, is "faith." We do not wish to anticipate our argument on the nature of faith, but if the Scriptural definition of the heart is taken, there is in this passage a strong hint as to the nature of that by which we appropriate the forgiveness of the Father. It is significant that the Scriptural and the scientific definitions of the heart coincide. The heart, as regarded in the Word of God, is the intellect, the emotions or sensibilities, and the will. If, then, that heart is cleansed by faith, faith purifies the intellect, the emotions and the will. It is not the magic act which some have erroneously taught it to be, but rather a process of cleansing by an attitude of the whole soul to God.

It is, however, sufficient to note here that this teaching agrees with that of Paul, that through faith we come to forgiveness, or, to state the same truth in other words, "the heart is cleansed."

But there is another thought which must engross our attention, if we would understand clearly just what the Apostle teaches concerning the blessing resultant from faith. It is the claim that the righteousness which he now has as a Christian is a righteousness which has in some manner come to him through faith. He exclaims joyously, "I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Phil. 3:8, 9). It is not our purpose to become entangled here in the discussion of the term, the righteousness of God (*ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*). There can be no doubt that, although the meaning of the phrase in Paul's mind is hard to define with precision, the righteousness which he means is a righteousness which comes from God. It is not one which is worked up within us by ourselves and out of our own resources. Neither does Paul mean that this righteousness is purely an imputed righteousness, one without real meaning. It is not that a man is only considered righteous because of his faith; he is righteous. Through faith he has come into the forgiven life in which true righteousness begins. "Faith is surrender, trust, receptiveness. It is not merely a condi-

tion of being pronounced righteous; it is the actual entrance upon the righteous life, because it is the beginning of glad and loyal obedience. Salvation is by faith, because faith is the acceptance of Christ's righteousness, not through imputation, but by actual participation in it through vital union with him. Christ's righteousness, that is, his life and spirit, is appropriated in faith; and the man whom God, in the sentence of justification, pronounces righteous is really so, not in the sense of being morally perfect, but in the sense of having begun the life of real righteousness—the life which is well pleasing to God." [3] These things we have been saying before, for we have been in contact with this truth in our consideration of the relation between forgiveness and sanctification. It is only the other side of the fact, that this righteousness which is the result of forgiveness, comes to us through our faith in Christ, which concerns us here. The righteousness from God, that which has God as its source, comes through faith in Christ Jesus.

II. LET US NOW CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THAT FAITH THROUGH WHICH FORGIVENESS IS APPROPRIATED

The Older Divines were wont to divide faith into various forms. They considered it to be of four kinds, —historical faith, temporary faith, the faith of miracles, and justifying or saving faith. Without saying more about it, it is sufficient to note in passing that this division, on the face of it, seems to be an

[3] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, p. 269.

arbitrary one. It smacks of pure speculation. Faith of the New Testament order is faith. These kinds may really be engrossed into one, and that one is the faith which saves.

1. The nature of the faith which appropriates the free forgiveness of the Father may be considered negatively.

(*a*) Appropriating faith is decidedly not mere belief. This is exactly what the majority of men have thought it to be. If one accept as true the revealed life of Jesus, if one assent heartily to the Biblical narratives, then that one has faith. By a shrewd act of believing, we may inherit eternal life. There is some undefinable merit attaching to the mere act of accepting as true the story of the life, suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. There are a number of instances in which the word "belief" is placed for the whole process which in the New Testament is called faith; but of itself belief is never faith. The Philippian jailer is told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" and he shall be saved and his house (Acts 16:30, 31). Paul tells the Romans that if a man "shall believe that God hath raised him from the dead" he shall be saved. But in these, as well as other references, the beginning act of assenting to the truth of the story of Christ is placed for the whole process of faith, in which Christ is accepted and what He has done is made the sinner's own. In each case the beginning step is followed by that which gives to faith its saving power. Had those addressed merely believed that God had raised Christ from the dead as an interesting fact, but one that made no difference in their attitude to-

ward God and divine things, then assuredly their belief would have meant nothing at all. It would have been only an intellectual assent to the fact of Christ. It is unfortunate that the English word "faith" has no cognate verb. It is dependent for such companionship upon the dissimilar word "believe." Dr. Clarke appreciates this difference and says, "If the second syllable of the word "confide" were in use as a separate word, so that one could say, 'I fide in Christ,' we should be richer for the purpose of expression; but as it is we have only one word for more than one idea. The consequence is that it is easy to confound faith with inferior forms of believing." [4] It is well to remember, as the difference between the two words, that belief is elementary, it is but the beginning stage of faith; faith is the whole process in which, because of what we believe, we appropriate to our own needy hearts the blessings which the grace of God has made possible for us.

It is interesting to note how Alexander Campbell mixes the two words in one of his brief definitions of faith. "To admit testimony to be true is in the sacred style equivalent to believing it; for he that believeth the testimony of God has simply 'set to his seal that God is true.'" Thus far Mr. Campbell is right. Belief is the credence of testimony,—the assent to the truth of the facts of the Gospel as they are revealed in the New Testament. But we cannot go with him in the next statement in the same connection. "Faith, indeed, is always but the conviction of the truth of testimony, whether that testimony be human or divine.

[4] "An Outline of Christian Theology," Clarke, p. 404.

To be convinced that any testimony or report is true is to believe it; to be convinced that it is not true is to disbelieve it; not to be able to decide is to doubt it." [5] This latter statement would have been beyond dispute had Mr. Campbell substituted the word "belief" for the first word of the sentence. Belief is all that he here says it is; faith is more than he defines it to be. Out of justice to him, however, it should be remembered that in practice he did go further in his definition of faith. To him faith meant repentance and baptism, and all other acts of obedience to the Lord Christ. It did not stop with the mere credence of the divine testimony.

(*b*) The faith which appropriates forgiveness is not a faith in the Bible. Thousands of men were being saved by their faith many years before the New Testament was completed. It is not amiss to say that the New Testament itself arose out of the faith of the Church of Christ. The faith in a person, the divine person, which had made them what they were, gave birth to the divine book which now tells us of Him. There are some now who are in grave danger of becoming Bibliolatrists; they worship the book rather than the One revealed in the book. One such once made the comment, "I am so glad that we have only the Bible as our creed." But the Bible is never the creed of the "Christian only." His creed could never be a book, even though it be the Book of God. The creed of the Church of Christ is its foundation. This is true of any creed. What a man believes politically is the foundation of his political life, the basis of his

[5] "Christian Baptism," Alexander Campbell, pp. 64, 65.

political actions. What one believes religiously is likewise the ground of his religious life. The creed of the Christian is Christ Himself. It is not that we believe, for our salvation, in theologies about Christ. We rest our hope in Him. The truth cannot be better stated than in the familiar words of Paul, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11).

While our faith is in a person and not in a book, yet we have great reverence for the Book. Without it we could not know of Him upon whom our faith rests. It is the medium through which He is made known to us now. And it is well, indeed, that such medium exists. Were we dependent alone upon the lives of Christian men for our knowledge of Christ, how distorted would be our view of Him. When we grow weary of the imperfect manner in which Christians make Him known to the world, what a relief it is to revel in the clear, beautiful outlines of His character as it is pictured in the New Testament. Were we to state it in a sentence, could we put it better than to say that Christ as He is revealed in the New Testament is the creed of the Church which He founded; He, thus made known, is the object of faith.

(*c*) The faith which appropriates the forgiveness which the love of the Father has so freely and fully made possible, is not the faith in that which makes parties and divisions in the Church of Christ. Our day is one in which the subject of Christian Unity is of supreme importance. Devout men of every denomination are energetically advocating a return to the primitive unity of the household of faith. Great confer-

ences are frequently being held in which this question is frankly faced. And is it not well since we are so interested in the way in which the lost unity of Christ's Church may be restored, that we note the fact that there is no saving power in those things which divide us? There is but one way to reunion: a return to the revelation concerning that which alone is essential to man's salvation. The faith which appropriates forgiveness is not a faith in this theology or that creedal interpretation of the Gospel of Christ. There never has been any saving power in any peculiar tenet which has divided one group of Christians from all others who honor the Lord Christ. The faith which saves, the faith which appropriates salvation, is something which is the priceless possession of all evangelical followers of the Master. It is faith in Him. Professor Mackintosh, after discussing the fact that in all creeds the speculative element has so crept in that to the beginner in the adventure of faith their statements would be puzzling in the extreme, concludes, "The New Testament, as usual, is wiser when to the seeker's question it returns the answer: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' That is, it goes on the clear and sufficient principle that what alone can awaken and satisfy the faith of sinful man is a Person. Instead of the creed it speaks of Jesus Christ." [6]

(*d*) Appropriating faith is not a faith to which salvation is attached as an arbitrary thing. God has demanded faith of the sinner, not as a condition which he has arbitrarily imposed and which might as well have been something else. He has demanded faith be-

[6] "The Divine Initiative," Mackintosh, p. 70.

cause it is the only thing that can meet the demands of the situation in which the sinner finds himself when he is confronted by the sin-bearing love of God in Christ. And surely it is just here that all the questions we have been discussing relative to infused righteousness are resolved. We may talk about forensic forgiveness and vital union with Christ and all the other problems which any exhaustive consideration of the whole subject of New Testament forgiveness may suggest, but after all, many of the very questions would be evacuated of much of their significance if it were not for the fact that they are builded upon the idea that faith is something which is really an arbitrary requirement of the Lord. And the result, evident to all, is that faith thus becomes in itself a work of merit by which salvation is earned. The consequent artificiality between faith and salvation has thus been emphasized as impossible of explanation because of the fact that they have no "natural, vital, or organic connection with each other." But faith is not this. Dr. Denney well argues that the whole perplexing field of theology in which these questions rise repeatedly is simplified and cleared when we see "that there is nothing arbitrary in faith, and that it is not so much a condition upon which salvation is by the will of God made to depend, as the one natural and inevitable way in which the salvation of God, present in Christ, is and must be accepted by men. When a man has heard the story of Jesus and the Gospel interpretation of it—when he takes in the truth that what before him on the cross is the revelation of a love in God deeper and stronger than sin, entering into all that sin means

for him and taking the burden of it in all its dreadful pressure upon Himself, yet clinging to him through it all—what is he to do? What does the situation require of him? Is it legitimate or becoming for him to say that such a revelation of love is unnecessary for him or irrelevant for his requirements? To say so would be to say that he had no sin, or none with which he did not feel competent to deal without such aid. Is it legitimate for him to say that such a revelation of love is too much, and to attempt negotiations with God on the assumption that further consideration might discover a way of salvation costing less to God and not so overwhelming to the sinner? Or can he surround the word of reconciliation with conditions of his own, and refuse to take the benefit of God's reconciling love, till he has guarantees that it will not be abused, whether the guarantees are supposed to be given in sufficient repentance for past sins or in sufficient amendment of life for the future? All these suppositions are impossible. If a man with the sense of sin on him sees what Christ on His cross means, there is only one thing for him to do—one thing which is inevitably demanded in that moral situation: to abandon himself to the sin-bearing love which appeals to him in Christ, and to do so unreservedly, unconditionally, and forever. This is what the New Testament means by faith." [7] In this extensive quotation from the great Scottish theologian, we have the very marrow of the whole matter set before us. It gives rebuke to us who have, even in our preaching, all too often placed the demand for faith before our hearers as though it were an arbitrary con-

[7] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, pp. 289, 290.

dition which, if once complied with, made salvation forever secure. Faith, under the moral conditions with which we are surrounded when we see the cross, is the only right thing. And he who thus throws himself upon this love which Christ reveals is right. The rightness is not a commodity infused or imputed: the sinner is right, he has received the reconciliation (Rom. 5:11), he is indeed reconciled.

(*e*) The faith universally required in the New Testament is not an act of belief by which we merit forgiveness.

To discuss this proposition is really but to continue from another slant our consideration of the position which we have just been following. We cannot earn salvation or forgiveness by accepting as true, in the intellectual act of belief, the Gospel of Jesus. Without doubt one of the worst of popular errors is that of relying on the manner of believing for salvation. If a man does not receive the feeling which so long has been mistaken for faith he is often told that there is evidently something wrong in the manner in which he has believed. Thus faith has been made in itself a work, and yet those who are guilty of doing this thing are loudest in their condemnation of a salvation which is by works. Campbell is correct when he affirms that salvation, and consequently forgiveness, "is through faith, and not on account of faith, as though there was in faith some intrinsic merit." It is not in the act of believing nor in the manner of it, but in that which we believe, and in the difference which such belief makes in our lives and in our whole attitude toward God, which is vital. And it is only in this, too, that

the blessing of the Father can be made our very own.

2. Having found what faith is not, we are now prepared to face it positively and to discover, if we can, just what it really is.

(*a*) Whatever else it may be, it is decidedly faith in Jesus Christ as a person. This is the universal New Testament position. A dozen verses flash into consciousness from which we may choose at random. Paul says, "We are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). He reminds Timothy that from babyhood he has known the sacred writings which are able to make him wise unto salvation "through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15). He exhorts the Colossians, "As therefore ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted and builded in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6, 7). To the Colossian brethren, whatever faith might be, its object was Christ Jesus. The writer of the Hebrew Epistle accepted without reservation this view of Paul, for he exhorts those to whom he writes to run with patience the great Christian race, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets those who run for God, "looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). In our study of the ground of forgiveness we found ourselves, in the New Testament, everywhere in contact with this idea. Jesus is the object of faith. It is always the same, whether we turn to Paul, or John, or Peter; faith to them is faith in a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the characteristics of the Rationalistic The-

ology has been its attempt to elevate faith entirely above the personal realm. We will never be able to solve the problems which are presented to us by the study of our Christian documents. They are confessedly fragmentary. They constantly contradict each other, until it is a task utterly beyond our power to construct a life of Christ which will be above criticism. Let us get out of the historical and away from the problems which arise from the connection of Christianity with the life of the historical Jesus, and let us soar into the realm of pure truth. Thus would some of the modernistic writers solve all the problems which our historic Christianity presents. Professor Paterson, my own teacher, admired and beloved, after discussing the process by which the rationalistic divines attenuate the Gospel and reduce to the minimum the blessings which the Gospel promises, concludes, "In the process of reducing the provisions of the Christian religion, the most distinctive feature is the tendency to substitute the power of ideas for the vital and vitalizing energies proceeding from the personal centers of divine life, as the means of raising men to a higher plane, and of furnishing them with the impetus to spiritual progress." [8] An indifference to the historical is oriental, but when the occidental enters such a realm, he is not at home. He feels that he must have contact with something more substantial. It will not, therefore, be some undefinable faith in good ethical ideals which will find permanent resting place in the hearts of western men: faith in a personality is something with which we are familiar; it is a language which, when spoken by the New

[8] "The Rule of Faith," Paterson, p. 341.

Testament writers, we can understand. Ideas alone are impotent; it is only as they become incarnate that they touch us.

(*b*) The faith which appropriates forgiveness begins with belief in the facts of the Gospel.

Alexander Campbell was right when he taught that belief is the credence of testimony. It is just that. The only criticism which could be urged with force against Mr. Campbell in this regard is that he did not go far enough in his definition. If one credit the testimony concerning the fact that at one time there was in the United States a Civil War he believes in the existence of that war. If one credit the testimony concerning the battle of King's Mountain, he believes that the battle was fought. And so it is also if one credit the testimony concerning Jesus, he believes in Him. To us has come the record in the New Testament of the life and work of Jesus. The record has been left by men who, above all else, were witnesses. It is amazing how great was the confidence of Jesus in ordinary men. In the most obscure province of the Roman Empire He picks out some of the most humble men of His acquaintance and unreservedly turns over to them His cause. He tells them to go into the whole world and make men Christian. Without means of travel, without telephone or telegraph, they are to go to the ends of the earth with His good news. And they did it,—did it so amazingly well that within three centuries Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire. And this victory was achieved through the witnesses whom He chose. In their writings those witnesses have left us a record so candid, so honest,

that the preaching of it to-day makes believers; it evokes faith. But any faith which can rightly come within the circle of the Christian definition must be based firmly upon the facts of the Gospel as those facts are recorded in the great Christian documents.

We have stated that appropriating faith begins with a belief of the facts of the Gospel. This is true, but it is not true in the sense that we merely believe in the facts as having happened. The facts, as such, isolated from the Gospel interpretation of them, are interesting, but they are not the Gospel. I may say that I believe that Christ died. That is an interesting fact. It is interesting that a good man should die. I may say that I believe He died upon a cross. That, too, is a sad thing, for it is always an event to provoke to sadness that a good man should die a martyr to his cause. I may say I believe the Master was buried and upon the third day was raised from the dead. This is not only interesting, it is wonderfull, it is thrilling. But I may go even this far without faith in the Gospel; for in themselves alone these wondrous facts are not the Gospel. I have saving, appropriating faith in the Gospel when I believe in the Gospel, and I believe in it when I believe in the facts as they are interpreted in the New Testament. When to my faith in the death of Christ, I add, "He died for my sins," then I have stated the glorious news. When to my belief in his burial and resurrection, I add, "He was raised for my justification," then have I stated the Gospel. The theory of the facts—their relation to sin and salvation and the future life—this is the Gospel, and this I must believe if I am to have that faith which will lead me into the

blessings of the Father's grace. It is exactly this which Paul affirms in his classic statement to the Corinthians. He begins by saying, "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you." Exhorting them to steadfastness in it, he proceeds to define it: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 1:1-5). Dr. Denney's pointed comment upon these verses is in line with what we have just said about the distinction between fact and theory. "It is impossible to leave out of the tradition which St. Paul had himself received and which he transmitted to the Corinthians, the reference to the meaning of Christ's death—'He died for our sins according to the Scriptures'—and to limit it to the fact: the fact needed no such authentication. It is a fact in its meaning for sinners which constitutes a gospel, and this, he wishes to assert, is the only gospel known." [9]

This type of faith, one which is rooted and grounded in the historic facts and the Gospel interpretation of them, is historic faith. Jesus actually lived, suffered, died, was buried and rose again. He was historic; something actually happened to Him. True faith which appropriates the Christian blessings will always be historic faith. Alexander Campbell is right when he contends: "There is no faith worth anything that is not historical; for all our religion is founded upon history." [10] One of Mr. Campbell's greatest contribu-

[9] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 80.
[10] "Christian Baptism," Alexander Campbell, p. 70.

tions to our modern thought concerning faith was his work in bringing men back to the historical basis upon which Christianity is builded. In his day, and we have not fully recovered from the effects of it even to the present hour, there prevailed a widespread mysticism in which faith was considered to be largely a matter of feeling. This was due in part to the work of James Hervey, a member of the "Godly Club" at Oxford. Hervey wrote "The Dialogues between Theron and Apasio." In this work he expounded the Methodist-Moravian view of faith. His insistence upon the "sense of adoption," and his identification of it with faith, did two things: (1) It made faith a state of feeling rather than the credence of truth by the intellect; and (2) it relegated belief to the end of the conversion process rather than placing it at the beginning where it logically belongs. Alexander Campbell called his day back to the facts of the Gospel as they had transpired in Palestine. From this we can never get far away and still be Christian in the New Testament meaning of the term. Our faith is founded upon something which came to pass in the valleys and upon the hills and mountains of the Holy Land.

We cannot emphasize too frequently the fact that the power of faith is not in our act of believing, nor in the manner of it, but in the content of it—in what we believe and in the difference which that belief makes in our attitude toward God. It is in the response which faith provokes that there is power to save. Paul confidently affirms that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). And so it is; the Gospel is power, but the

power is in what we believe, in the saving proposition that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and the Saviour of the world. This is the saving truth, and to believe it is the beginning of that which will result in forgiveness from the Father and the promise of eternal life with Him.

(*c*) The faith which appropriates forgiveness is manifest in a genuine repentance toward God.

It is not ours here to discuss repentance save as it is related to faith. For long there has been much confusion regarding the exact relation between believing in Christ and turning in penitence to God. The view which has had the largest currency is one which states that repentance precedes faith. Faith is at the end of the process of conversion. Those who preach it thus base their argument upon one statement of Jesus, "Repent ye, and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Logically, however, faith precedes repentance. We repent because we believe. It is because of what we have known of Christ that we desire to turn toward Him and away from our sins, in repentance. When we come into contact with the sin-bearing love of God upon the cross, our hearts incline toward Him. In our repentance, faith is objectified. It is because of what we believe that we turn from sin, that we change our minds concerning it. How could any man repent of sin against God if he did not believe he had sinned against Him? And it is just this, that Jesus reveals to us our sin, and that we believe in Him, which brings us to repentance. Faith is the "foundation of repentance from dead works." It bears the same relation to repentance as cause does to effect, or means to an end.

It is as literally true that "repentance cometh by faith, as faith cometh by hearing, as hearing by the word of God." Faith is the process in which the soul abandons itself unreservedly to the love of God in Christ; repentance is the act in which the turning away from sin to the love of God is made.

This relationship between faith and repentance is set forth even more clearly in the foundational meaning of the word itself. There are two words in the New Testament which are translated "repent," *μετάνοω* and *μεταμέλομαι*. The second of these terms is never found, in all the New Testament, in connection with faith or any of the Gospel facts. It is never in the imperative mode; God, in commanding repentance, never employs it. And the reason is evident, for it means merely to have sorrow or regret for something done. Further than this the word does not go. When Judas is said to have repented, this is the word used. He had sorrow, he regretted profoundly what he had done; he did not repent. God never uses this word, for he never commands any one to repent in the style of Judas. The word used is *μετάνοια*, which means "a change of mind, a change of heart and affections, with a view to the reformation of life." When Peter commanded the Pentecostians to repent, he used this word. It was as though he said "*μετάνοετε*, change your minds in regard to sin, act from new motives, in view of what you have just heard, turn to God. Because of what you now believe concerning Jesus Christ, repent toward Him." And what was the change in their minds which induced them to cry to him for the way of salvation? When they had assembled to hear him, they

believed Christ dead. They believed that His body had been buried in the tomb, and that early on the morning of the third day the disciples had come and stolen it away while the guard slept. But Peter's sermon had proved to them that they had killed their own Lord, and now, as they cried aloud, it was the cry of believing men. On this new belief concerning Jesus they were commanded to repent or turn away from their past sins to Him who could save them and who so eagerly waited to forgive them. Faith here, belief in Christ, inspired their repentance.

(*d*) The faith which appropriates forgiveness is further objectified in acts of definite obedience.

Professor Mackintosh defines it as "the obedient and grateful apprehension of God in Christ." [11] John reports Jesus as saying, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The writer of Hebrews emphasizes the necessity of an obedient faith, "And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). It is true that faith leads to obedience; is it not even better to say that obedience is faith itself in action? Faith and obedience are the inside and the outside of the same thing.

The meaning of the good confession is apprehended when we consider it as faith in act, faith objectified. The man of faith is constantly confessing Jesus as Lord; the life of faith is continually a life of confession. But in New Testament days the faith which came through the hearing of the Gospel was focused into a great public act of confession. It is to this act

[11] "The Divine Initiative," Mackintosh, p. 70.

that Paul refers when he writes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (I Tim. 6:12). It is interesting to note just what Paul considers to be a foundational thing in faith. He bluntly tells what one must believe, and in so doing definitely ties our faith to that which is historic. One must believe that God raised Him from the dead. There is here nothing of the etherial; it is not a Gospel which is, so to speak, up in the air and divorced from the basic experiences in the historic life of Jesus. It is a definite assertion that what we believe must have direct contact with that which has basis in fact, "that God raised Him from the dead." [12] Can we deny this fundamental truth and still lay claim to being Christian in the New Testament conception of the word? The confession of Jesus as Lord must also be made with the mouth and before witnesses, preferably many witnesses. Here is an act of faith, an act in which positively and without any reservations whatsoever, the one coming to Christ identifies himself with the Master and His cause. It is an act which could only come from a heart full of trust; it is truly the good confession of faith.

We shall later in our study consider with some care the act of baptism as related to the forgiveness of sins. It is sufficient here to note it as an act of faith. In this positive act in which the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are set forth in symbolic action there

[12] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 133.

is a mighty confession of faith. By acting out these things we declare our faith in those basic facts without which there never could have been the Gospel of Christ —his death for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection for our justification. In his usual brilliant way, Professor Denney states this truth. In giving an exposition of Romans 6, he says, "But the new life is involved in the faith evoked by the sin-bearing death of Christ, and in nothing else; it is involved in this, and this is pictorially presented in baptism, hence the use St. Paul makes of this sacrament in the same chapter. He is able to use it in his argument in the way he does because baptism and faith are but the outside and inside of the same thing." [13] Baptism is faith objectified. As one cannot define faith as only belief in Christ, so also it is impossible to define it without those acts in which it is made saving and dynamic, those acts in which it shows itself alive. John Sweeney, in his sermon, "Justification by Faith," expresses this in language which at first gives us pause, shocks us into inquiry, "Baptism, therefore, is simply actualized faith. Baptism for the remission of sins is justification by faith. Baptism is faith acting and appropriating justification for the believer." [14] Dr. Sweeney, in another connection, shows that baptism is not to be considered a work through which we merit salvation. It was not against such that Paul unloosed his thunders. The works to which he referred were those acts of the Jews through which they thought to earn salvation. Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ, since Christ left

[13] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 133.
[14] "New Testament Christianity," Sweeney, p. 401.

it as a command, that one who has true faith in Him will do this thing which He requires. This is the foundational meaning of faith. A great modern Scottish theologian recognizes this as faith itself in action when he says, "I cannot set my faith upon Him without being thereby aware that I must obey Him unconditionally."

How often has the mistake been made of sharply distinguishing between certain steps in the plan of salvation. There is first of all the act of hearing the Gospel. After this there is the very clearly defined step of believing it. When we have believed, we take another definite step; we repent. After our repentance we make a public confession. When once the confession has been made, we go down into the waters and are baptized. It is true that we can thus divide the whole process which we call faith into these steps, but it does not destroy the fact that, after all, they are but steps in which faith is casting itself upon the Saviour, they are but steps in that whole process, that way of life which itself bears the name of faith. Alexander Campbell was wont to speak of the various steps in the one process as "that golden chain of grace which binds and connects our souls to the throne of God." But with him these steps were so intimately connected that it was impossible to separate them from each other.

(*e*) It is apparent from our study that we may now sum up our definition of that faith through which we appropriate the gracious forgiveness of the Father in a sentence. It is, above all things else, an attitude of the soul toward God in Jesus Christ our Lord. There are many things which true faith includes. This has

become manifest as we have considered it from the various standpoints. How many-sided it is! It is belief, it is awe, it is reverence, it is dependence, it is humility. But, again, it is penitence, it is obedience, "it is everything" included in our experience of God the Saviour and His boundless love.

Faith is the whole attitude of the sinful man who yearns for the forgiveness which the Father longs to bestow. In a surpassingly beautiful passage, Professor Denney exclaims: "Grace is not a thing which can be infused, nor is there any meaning in such an expression as that love is inherent in the heart; there are no gifts of grace which, so to speak, can be lodged bodily in the soul. Grace is the attitude of God to man, which is revealed and made sure in Christ, and the only way it becomes effective in us for new life is when it wins for us the response of faith. And just as grace is the whole attitude of God in Christ to sinful men, so faith is the whole attitude of the sinful soul as it surrenders itself to that grace. Whether we call it the life of the justified, or the life of the reconciled, or the life of the regenerate, or the life of grace or of love, the new life is the life of faith and nothing else. To maintain the original attitude of welcoming God's love as it is revealed in Christ bearing our sins,—not only to trust it, but to go on trusting,—not merely to believe in it as a mode of transition from the old to the new, but to keep on believing,—to say with every breath we draw, 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in thee I find'—is not a part of the Christian life, but the whole of it." [15] Everything is present in faith and the

[15] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, pp. 301-02.

life of faith—self-sacrifice, contrition, the impulse to service; it is the attitude of obedient surrender of the soul, it "is the whole manifestation of Christianity in life and act."

It has, I think, also been clear from the very beginning of our discussion that the working power of faith, its center and heart, is love. It is not something isolated from faith, another entity, so to speak; it is the motive power of faith itself. Paul so thought of it. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith worketh through love" (Gal. 5:6). When we abandon ourselves to the sin-bearing love of God in Christ, when thus we would appropriate to our needy souls the forgiveness which can make us righteous, our faith must have love as its very essence. It is a love evoked by what we see in Christ. To look at Him upon the cross dying for sin, and to recognize that in this we see something more powerful than sin,—something which is the last reality in God,—this is that experience above all others which evokes the love which works through faith to do His will. This is what John means when he writes, "We love because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). To speak of love as some kind of plus to faith is to speak in words unknown to the New Testament. It is the heart and core of faith. Thus it is that when the wandering son casts himself unreservedly upon the love of God, in faith, he is right. It is not a fictitious righteousness; he is right, right in his new relation to the Father, right in that now he can grow into that stature of the child of

God in the protecting and nurturing love of the Father's home.

But we would miss the meaning of appropriating faith altogether, were we to neglect to think of it as trust. Whatever else he may have meant by his definition of it, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews surely defines faith thus, and in the whole eleventh chapter illustrates this side of it. "Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). "The assurance of things hoped for"; the certainty that those things are real. "The conviction of things not seen"; the certainty that those things not seen are not unreal but only unseen. To the man of faith, there are things which are beyond the realm of the knowable and the tangible, beyond possibility of realization by sense, and yet to him they are real, they are actual. Try as he will, he cannot make himself disbelieve them. He believes in God, and because he believes in Him, those things which can only come from Him are actual. He trusts. And thus does he believe that he shall be forgiven. God is his father and he can trust Him for that blessing. It is because of trust that the heavenly home is real to him. Because God is father, He will want His children with Him in the paternal mansions. It is in the realm of trust that faith is an adventure. Through trust we walk in paths which never before our feet have trod. Through trust we leave the known and venture far beyond the stars to heights which we find through such experience to be real. Dr. Clarke expresses it well. "The nature of faith is nowhere better illus-

trated than in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Here both elements appear, the perception of the divine spiritual facts as real, and the hearty committing of soul and life to them. Here are found most living and beautiful illustrations of that trustful recognition of divine reality by virtue of which Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and the patriarchs greeted the promises from afar; and this is faith." [16] There comes a limit to our knowledge. We are done, and no further can we go. It is then that we reach out through trust and embrace needful realities by faith. Then it is that our sentiment is that of Tennyson when he thought of Jesus:

> "Strong Son of God; immortal love,
> Whom we who have not seen thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove."

We cannot prove God, nor immortality, nor the forgiveness of sins; but we believe, and concerning them we cannot persuade ourselves to disbelieve.

III. IT WILL NOT BE REPETITION FOR US TO INQUIRE AS TO THE MANNER BY WHICH THIS APPROPRIATING FAITH IS PRODUCED IN THE HEART

It is certainly not something which we work up for ourselves. We do not take up faith as one would take up some pleasant form of exercise or some new fad. It is not something which we produce out of our own

[16] "An Outline of Christian Theology," Clarke, p. 404.

resources. This is perhaps one of the worst of the various naturalistic explanations of faith. It ignores all God has done in bringing salvation to us. It takes the form of explaining the spiritual as merely the result of the evolution of character. By being good I may eventually become spiritual. Forgiveness is by character and not by any act of God in our behalf.

The old theologians were right when they contended that faith is a gift of God. Not that it is a gift in the sense that it is something infused or a commodity actually placed by miracle in the heart. This view of it has been illustrated by saying that faith comes into the heart, flashed from the Father as an electric spark comes over the wire. But this is not the sense in which faith can be said to be God's gift. It is a gift in that He provides the object of faith and creates the conditions which bring it into being. It is a gift in the sense that He is responsible for all that makes it possible; the initiative is with Him. With our understanding of the nature of faith as we have been considering it, we may say that faith is a gift in the same sense in which faith, turning to God in repentance, is a gift. It is to this sublime truth, this saving act of Christ, that the apostle gives expression, "Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:31). He makes room for repentance by providing those experiences in His own cross and resurrection, which evoke it, that remission of sins may follow as the greatest and most-to-be-desired of all heavenly blessings. I cannot do better than to quote the beautiful words of another, as he sets forth the

how of the gift. "Christ's forgiveness begins by revealing our sin. Or, it begins by revealing God's justice, and by uttering in our consciences his condemnation of sin. Christ makes this revelation in many ways. He makes it by His personal character, by His personal presence in the world. The sinless one leaves us no cloak for our sin. Christ, and Christ alone, is able to give this revelation of evil. But further, the whole development of Christ's history is a further revelation of evil. Good as such, and evil as such, are there seen in conflict. And the whole evil of our sin is made plain to us when we perceive that we are sinning against love. The cross is the supreme manifestation of sin. There we see sin, not only in outward acts, but Christ's exceeding sickness and sorrow under the burden of the world's wickedness. At the cross of Christ believers have always learned how evil sin is. Whether or not their doctrinal explanations of their own experience have been correct, the experience itself has been God-given, spiritual, saving. Christ has convinced them of sin. Christ condemns not his immediate persecutors, but the whole world. He reveals our malady as not weakness or accident but guilt." [17]

It is a universal Christian experience that sin is unmasked at the cross. There it reveals itself in its true form. It is a peculiarity of sin that it always tries to hide its real nature. The sinner always finds a way to justify himself. But in the presence of Christ's cross all the shams fall away, and sin stands revealed in its ugly outlines. Here our supposed legitimate self-interest is shown to be but selfishness. In the

[17] "Essays Toward a New Theology," Mackintosh, pp. 48, 49.

light of His cross, our firmness appears as calculated cruelty. Before Him our guarded self-respect is but arrogance. And it is thus that our Lord so powerfully gives repentance; He makes it impossible for us, in the conditions in which we find ourselves before Him, to hide sin under a cloak.

We have already insinuated the true manner of faith's coming. It is by revelation, and not in any other way, that it comes to the soul. It has been the experience of intuitive men that a revelation comes to the soul through nature. It is not clear in outline, but it is a revelation. Wordsworth felt the presence, and in familiar and beautiful passage tells us of it:

> "I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of thought,
> And rolls through all things."

There are a thousand experiences which bring dim revelations of something that is to be. It may be a moment when in spiritual ecstasy we see beyond the present and catch a gleam of that which is to come. There have been intuitions of immortality. Of such an intuition Tennyson sings:

"My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.

Here sits he shaping wings to fly,
His heart forbodes a mystery;
He names the name Eternity."

Of life that is to be, though misty and shifting its form, Wordsworth had an intuition, a revelation to the soul:

"Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

To the poet, such thought or intuition could not be explained other than by a direct revelation from the Father of all. That he thought it so is manifest when he says:

"In such access of mind,
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired."

In frequent statements of the New Testament, we are told how faith comes. John writes of its beginnings, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the

presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life in his name" (John 20:30, 31). The book was written to reveal Jesus, that through the revelation thus given faith in Him might come, and through that faith, eternal life. Jesus is the revelation of the Father, and in the writings of those who knew Him in the intimacy of the Apostolic circle, is recorded that word through which the revelation is made known to us. At the so-called Council in Jerusalem, Peter spake in the same strain, "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago, God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7). Faith was to be generated in the Gentile heart by a preaching of the word of the Gospel, the revelation of Jesus. Paul climaxes it when he writes to the Romans, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). That through which we appropriate forgiveness comes by the revelation which we receive through the written word of God, because by it Jesus is made known to our hearts and He evokes faith. When He is presented to us in His beauty of life, in His sacrificial death, in His glorious resurrection, He appeals for our faith. "You are appealed to for faith in one who, simply by being what he is, is capable of eliciting and holding a spontaneous and reasonable trust. The object of faith is here the sufficient cause of faith, or, to put it otherwise, the adequate reasons why I should commit my life to

Christ are all contained in the fact of Christ Himself." [18]

There is yet another way in which faith is brought to the heart: through the lives of those who knew Christ as Saviour and Lord. God's mightiest revelations have always been made through great personalities. And it is because we are connected vitally with the stream of believing life that Christ is made known to us. A godly mother or father, a beloved teacher whose very life shone with the love of Christ, a dear friend who was through and through a Christian—how much do we owe to such for our knowledge of Him! What a responsibility is ours, who believe in the Lord, to see to it that the image of our Master which men see in our lives shall be a true one, that it shall not be distorted and besmirched by our failures and derelictions. Through Jesus and those who are His, we have a new idea of God, a new faith in Him. And when we know this, we can never think of faith as our own doing; we then realize to the full that it is from God. He is yearning for us, through His Son he is seeking for us, and it is ours to respond in penitent, obedient, loving trust.

[18] "The Divine Initiative," Mackintosh, p. 71.

CHAPTER IV

BAPTISM AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 2:38.)

What shall the modern man think of baptism? The answer to this question will be determined by what he thinks of the ultimate realities of the Christian religion. If he feels that Jesus was only the pattern believer, that His cross was after all only a piece of religious impressionism,—the last act of the teaching of our Lord, but effectual only as a moral influence and not as a sacrifice by which the way to the Father is opened to us,—then baptism will have but little interest for him. To such a man as this, baptism will become decreasingly significant because "there is no real meaning in baptism, however impressive Christ may be, if He be not regenerative, if it means that we are to be but moved by the Spirit, and not born again."[1] In a word, we are trying to say that the baptism as conceived in the New Testament is founded upon the atonement of Christ, that it is rooted and grounded in what Jesus did upon the cross, that all its meaning flows from that precious fountain. "Bap-

[1] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 178.

tism is a confessional act to which the assurance of forgiveness is attached."[2] A confessional act! A confession of our faith in the dead, buried, resurrected and exalted Christ as Lord. When, therefore, one comes to the place in which Jesus is no longer Lord and Christ of his life, that act which is a mighty confession of such faith loses all its significance and becomes a matter of indifference. If baptism is indissolubly connected with the forgiveness of sins, it will survive in the Church of God; if it has no such connection, the sooner we throw it into the discard the better for the spiritual life of God's people. It is here that the whole question regarding the survival of baptism rests. And it is significant that those who are to-day reticent in speaking of baptism or practicing it are those who are not sure as to the certainty of the fundamental things which the Church has taught throughout the years, and which were believed in the New Testament community. A minister, who is pastor of one of the largest churches in the southern part of the United States, recently said, "I feel ashamed of myself every time I go down into the water to baptize." This man is one who holds to the misnamed theory of the moral influence of the atonement. He is one who believes that we ought to believe in God because Jesus believed in Him, and that we should believe in immortality and the forgiveness of sins because Jesus believed in these things. Nothing that Jesus did, in any special way, makes us reconciled to God save that He teaches us that God is a loving Father. It is not surprising that one believing as this man does

[2] "The Atonement the Heart of the Gospel," Campbell, p. 190.

would be ashamed to baptize when the act is so indissolubly connected with the atonement as it is conceived and exhibited in the New Testament. That which gives to baptism its meaning and power he no longer believes; hence, he is ashamed to baptize. One cannot but wonder why he does not cease that which has become but a mockery. How can he do in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit that which to him is but a meaningless physical act? Honesty, if nothing else, would seem to dictate that he quit the practice altogether.

Is baptism connected in any way with the forgiveness of sins or with that which is the ground of our forgiveness? If it is, it will be as unchangeable and as perpetual as the final work of the Lord Himself. If it has not such a connection, a modern impatience with those things in religion which are purely formal will demand its discontinuance. The very life of the ordinance, therefore, depends upon its absolute and final relation to those things without which there would be no Christian religion at all. To a consideration of this relation, then, we will devote ourselves in the present chapter.

I. IN THE WORLD OF NEW TESTAMENT IDEAS, BAPTISM IS ALWAYS CONNECTED WITH THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

It has been the notable tendency of modern criticism to acknowledge that Paul was a sacramentarian or a believer in the fact that baptism does have to do with the remission of sins. The older Free Church

theologians were filled with absolute consternation if this was even mentioned as a possibility, but there cannot be a shadow of doubt that to-day there is a decided trend among the critical scholars toward the sacramentarian view of things. Weiss, for example, is an out and out sacramentarian when he affirms that "baptism is the second great principle of salvation, and not less indispensable for regeneration or the reception of the Holy Spirit than faith is for justification." [3] Wernle is equally a believer in this attitude of the Apostle to the Gentiles when he says, "It was Paul who first created the conception of a sacrament." [4] Lake contends for this view of the position of Paul on baptism (that it does have to do with the remission of sins, and is therefore a sacrament) when he writes, "Baptism is, for St. Paul and his readers, universally and unquestioningly accepted as a 'mystery' or sacrament which works ex opere operato: and from the unhesitating manner in which St. Paul uses this fact as a basis for argument, as if it were a point on which Christian opinion did not vary, it would seem as though this sacramental teaching is central in the primitive Christianity to which the Roman Empire began to be converted." [5] Pfleiderer is equally certain of Paul's sacramental belief when he says, "Baptism appears as the foundation of the life in the Spirit, and at the same time, as the means by which he is communicated," [6] while Professor Andrews sums up the matter when he says, "With this evidence before us, it seems very hard

3 Quoted by Andrews, "The Church and the Sacraments," p. 144.
4 "Beginnings of Christianity," E. T., I, pp. 273-4.
5 "Earlier Epistles of St. Paul," p. 385.
6 "Primitive Christianity," E. T., I, p. 387.

to resist the conclusion (however little we may like it), that if the Epistles of St. Paul do not enunciate the ecclesiastical doctrine of baptismal regeneration, they at any rate approximate very closely to it." [7] With these illustrious names, many others could be mentioned of those who have come to the conclusion (Weinel, Feine, Titius, Heitmüller, Schweitzer, etc.), and many of them with great reluctance, "that the sacramental principle is a vital element in the teaching of Paul." While the symbolic position, that baptism is but a symbol of what takes place, has been defended for years by such men as Bruce, Candlish, etc., yet the consensus of scholarship seems to be that to Paul baptism was a sacrament, that it did have in some way to do with the remission of sins.

A cursory examination of some of the passages in his Epistles where baptism is considered enforces this contention. First of all, the mighty statement in the Roman letter attracts our attention. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him, therefore, through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-5). In the same strain he writes to the Colossians, "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). To the Galatians he writes, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). From these statements

[7] "The Church and the Sacraments," p. 149.

there can be no doubt but that Paul held that one of the steps, shall we say the final step, of those which lead to Christ is baptism. There is forgiveness of sins only in Christ, the Lamb of God. It is only one step more, then, to the position that that which is instrumental in bringing us into union with Christ is vitally related to the forgiveness of our sins. Only this can he mean by such phrases as "baptized into Christ," or "baptized into his death."

But there are several other passages worthy of note as illustrating the so-called sacramentarianism of Paul. In the first letter to the Corinthians he writes: "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye were washed (Greek 'washed yourselves'), but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 6:9-11). "The best commentary on the phrase 'ye were washed' is to be found in Acts 22:16, where Ananias is represented as saying to Paul on the day of his conversion, 'Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.' In both these statements there seems to be a very definite nexus between baptism and the forgiveness of sins. It would rob the statement in Corinthians of all its force if we paraphrased the phrase 'ye were washed' into 'ye were baptized' as a symbol of your conversion." [8]

8 "The Church and the Sacraments," Andrews, p. 148.

Another passage in the Epistle of Titus, even though it may be considered by some not to have been written by Paul, yet without doubt comes from the Pauline school, and is illustrative of this same belief that baptism does have a vital relation to the forgiveness of sins. "When the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing (literally, laver) of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7). "Here by the washing of regeneration the apostle means baptism, which is so called because it is a species of washing connected with the process of regeneration; and it is affirmed by this and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (the inward work of the Spirit which precedes baptism) we are saved." [9] At any rate, the thing to be noted in this passage is that, according to the Pauline mode of thinking, there is a connection between baptism and the remission of sins.

One other passage will serve sufficiently to illustrate the indisputable fact that this position is true, and that, whether we like it or not, Paul belongs to the ranks of the so-called sacramentarians. In the "great hierarchy of spiritual realities" which he names in the Ephesian Epistle, the Apostle includes baptism. "There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

9 "Commentary on Acts," McGarvey, p. 252.

Why should he have placed baptism on this high pinnacle if it was not considered by him to be far more than merely a symbol of our conversion to the Lord. He places it among the fundamental things, and the fact that he does so is simply in line with all his other teaching about it, namely, that it deserves such a place because it is connected with the solution of that which has ever been the central problem of religion, the forgiveness of sins.

A final and indisputable statement is found in the next chapter of the Ephesian letter in the words, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." Commenting on these words, Dr. Andrews says, "No amount of ingenuity can eviscerate their clear meaning and significance." [10] There can be no doubt, therefore, with all the evidence which we have considered, that the Apostle Paul believed baptism to be more than a mere symbol, —that he believed it to be in some way connected with the great atonement of our Lord, and, therefore, with our redemption; that it did have a clear and unmistakable relation to the remission of sins.

It is interesting to note how some of the great scholars, who have been forced by the evidence which we have been considering to acknowledge that Paul did believe baptism has a relation to the forgiveness of sins, try to explain this position away. It is contended, for instance, that there is but one way out of the dilemma. This is to be found in the argument that sacramentarianism is not native to the soil of

10 "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 149.

Christianity, "but is one of those alien elements which have filtered into his (Paul's) thought from the atmosphere of the age. Its origin is to be traced not to the teachings of Jesus or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but rather to current beliefs and practices which prevailed in certain pagan forms of religion at the time. Sacramentarianism arose not as the natural evolution of the primal seed of Gospel Truth which was revealed to the world in the teaching and work of Jesus Christ, but rather as an 'involution' or product of its environment." [11] There can be no doubt that ideas analogous to those which seem to appear in baptism were prevalent in the pagan world of the time. In the Greek Mysteries and other forms of religion there were decidedly sacramentarian ideas. Now the argument would make it appear that these had a reflex influence upon the thought of Paul who was acquainted with such pagan teachings. We shall not attempt just here to answer this position in detail. It is enough to notice that it is the suggested "way out" of accepting the teaching, so clear and unmistakable, that baptism has to do with the remission of sins. For so many years it has been taught among the majority of theologians that baptism is but a symbolic act, that it is a hard thing for many in this day, when the science of scriptural interpretation has swept away the old unscriptural positions, to accept the plain teaching of the Word. It is to be noted that what seems to be the only way out is simply to deny that such teaching has any divine foundation, and that, if Paul taught it, he invented it all, or borrowed it bodily from the

11 "The Church and the Sacraments," Andrews, p. 157.

pagan religions around him. But that in the teaching of the Apostle to the Gentiles there is the firm conviction that baptism and the forgiveness of sins are vitally related, is acknowledged, though at times reluctantly, by the majority of the best theologians of the modern school.

It is necessary for a moment to advert to the first proposition of this discussion. It is that in the world of New Testament ideas baptism is always connected with the remission of sins. The so-called sacramentarian attitude is not merely a Pauline mode of thought,—it is a New Testament attitude. In a word, what Paul wrote in his letters was the universal faith of the Church, so universal, in fact, that there was no controversy about it. The words of one of our greatest modern New Testament scholars, the late Professor Denney, express this truth so clearly that I cannot do better than to quote them. "In all its forms, the commission has to do either with baptism (so in Matthew and Mark) or with the remission of sins (so in Luke and John). These are but two forms of the same thing, for in the world of New Testament ideas, baptism and the remission of sins are inseparably associated." In yet another splendid passage he says, "There is a link wanted to unite what we have seen in the Gospels with what we find when we pass from them to the other books of the New Testament, and that link is exactly supplied by a charge of Jesus to His disciples to make the forgiveness of sins the center of their Gospel, and to attach it to the rite by which men were admitted to the Christian society. In an age when

baptism and remission of sins were inseparable ideas, —when, so to speak, they interpenetrated each other,— it is no wonder that the sense of our Lord's charge is given in some of the Gospels in one form, in some in another; that here He bade them baptize, and there preach the forgiveness of sins." [12] A brief study of some of the other passages in the New Testament aside from those which are distinctively Pauline will show how universal was the belief in the New Testament, that baptism has to do with the remission of sins. First, then, consider the baptism of John the Baptist, which prefigured Christian baptism, and which in the case of the Apostles themselves was reckoned as Christian baptism. This was a "baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). In this rite the remission of sins is inseparably associated with baptism, it is a baptism for the remission of sins, "a baptism of repentance with the view to the remission of sins." The point to note is that the so-called Pauline idea is here.

The great commission of our Lord, in whatever form it is given in the Gospels, is, as we have already noted in the words of Dr. Denney, always connected either with baptism or the forgiveness of sins, and "these two are but two forms of the same thing." [13] Right here, then, in that great command out of which the church has grown, we have two ideas interpenetrating, indissolubly connected, and founded upon the death of our Lord. In the book of Acts, Luke speaks

12 "The Death of Christ," Denney, pp. 52-58.
13 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

of this relation again and again. The great utterance of Peter on Pentecost is one of the mightiest of these references. To the agonized cry of the conscience-stricken multitude, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins, the same language here means the same thing,—that the baptism thus commanded in the name of Jesus was in order to, or with a view to, the remission of sins. So did Peter understand it, and so did they who received it. Here, therefore, in the first Gospel sermon after the return of our Lord to glory, baptism was preached and received with the so-called sacramentarian attitude clearly manifest. There is no conversion recorded in the Book of Acts which does not end with the baptism of the believer. Keeping in mind that those who went out preaching the word were those who had been brought into Christ through the first teaching of the Jerusalem church, and that all those who were baptized in the Jerusalem church were baptized with the view to the remission of sins, it seems but a logical inference to suggest that the same purpose was in the minds of all those who preached, and all those who received the commanded baptism. As a substantiation of this position, we have the plain words of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Here, if this verse illustrates anything at all, it is surely the fact that the New Testament Christians believed that in baptism

they were translated into the realm where the forgiveness of sins was the priceless possession.

In the appendix to Mark our Lord is quoted, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Even if the contentions of most of the scholars be correct, and this portion be not a true part of the Gospel but only an addition, yet it serves to illustrate the fact which we are noting, that the New Testament church believed baptism had to do with the remission of sins. Still another, and a crucial verse in the First Epistle of Peter, leaves no doubt as to the attitude of the New Testament mind toward baptism in its relation to that which is of more interest to the soul in the religious realm than anything else. After a reference to the time of the flood, when eight souls "were saved through water," the writer goes on to add the mightily significant words "which (water) also after a true likeness doth also now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." "This later clause deals simply with the mode in which baptism works, and states that its efficacy consists not in the physical effect produced by the water in cleansing the body, but in the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (whatever this much debated phrase may mean). "The essential point in the passage is the categorical statement that baptism is an agency by which salvation is rendered possible." [14] The climax of the teaching of the New Testament, however, aside from the words of Paul, is to be found in the statement attributed to our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus, by the

[14] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, pp. 153, 154.

Apostle John, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). From this statement, in its apparent meaning, there is no escape. Baptism is essential, not in the sense of bene esse, but to the esse of the Christian life. Without it there is no sense in which we can enter into the kingdom of God. We may not like this teaching; it may conflict with all that we have been taught or with all that we have thought about the subject; it may come into violent collision with all our denominational prejudices. What we are interested in just now is that it is the teaching of the New Testament writers. Do with it what we will, baptism is in some way connected with the remission of sins. In a word, the so-called sacramentarian attitude on the question of baptism is not merely a Pauline mode of thought; it is a New Testament attitude, characteristic of the New Testament writers from beginning to end, one about which there was never a shadow of doubt in any of their minds. The evidence for this is so overwhelming, and the arguments so absolutely conclusive, that in the words of Dr. Andrews, "We are forced to admit that as far as exegesis is concerned, the sacramentarian interpretation of Paulinism (and on the preceding page he admits the whole New Testament) has won a decisive victory, and the symbolical school has been driven off the field. There can be no doubt whatever that baptism and the Eucharist stood for far more in the life of the Apostolic Church than they do in the estimation of the bulk of the members of the Free Churches today. The evidence seems to me to be so clear upon

this point as to amount to almost demonstrative proof." [15]

It seems clear in the light of these facts that just here lies the answer to the argument that Paul received his sacramentarian principles from the environing atmosphere in which he lived. We know that later on the church was susceptible to the influences of the pagan religions and the philosophic schools by which it was surrounded, but the evidence for an infiltration of these ideas into all the teaching of the early New Testament writers is so meager that we cannot lay too much stress upon it. It seems far more likely that the influence went the other way, from Christianity out upon the pagan religions. In the world of the New Testament, baptism and the remission of sins were always associated, and the evidence is incontrovertible that this universal idea goes back to the very earliest Christian tradition. I have no desire needlessly to pile up authorities, but Dr. Denney has said what I want to say so much better than I could possibly say it that I cannot refrain from quoting him at length once more: "The New Testament nowhere gives us the idea of an unbaptized Christian,—'by one Spirit we were all baptized into the one body' (I Cor. 12:13). Paul, in regulating the observance of the Supper at Corinth, regulates it as part of the Christian tradition which goes back for its authority, through the primitive church, to Christ himself. 'I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you' (I Cor. 11:23). In other words there was no such thing known to Paul as a Christian society without baptism as its rite of com-

15 "The Church and the Sacraments," Andrews, pp. 154, 155.

munion. And if there was no such thing known to Paul, there was no such thing in the world. There is nothing in Christianity more primitive than the sacraments, and the sacraments, wherever they exist, are witnesses to the connection between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins." [16]

II. LET US NOW ATTEMPT A CONSTRUCTIVE STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM AS RELATED TO THE REMISSION OF SINS

That this reconstruction of the teaching of the churches regarding baptism is urgently needed is evidenced by the great confusion which exists on the subject everywhere, by the apparent decay in the interest of thousands in any baptism at all, and by the fact that a position is needed upon which the coming unity of the Church of Christ may be consummated. The Church of Christ must do something. In the words of Dr. Andrews there are two things which we may do, (1) "We may return to the sacramentarian teaching of St. Paul and the other writers of the New Testament," or (2) "We may argue that sacramentarianism is not native to the soil of Christianity,"—in other words, we may explain it away. But do we want to explain it away? Is it necessary to explain it away? Is it not far more likely that in all the various forms of thought as to what baptism really is, and what it really does, and what it symbolizes, there is truth? May it not be, for instance, that in emphasizing the fact that it is a symbol a man may be right, and the only place where he is wrong is in contending that it is a symbol only?

[16] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 60.

May it not be that after all there is a common ground upon which we can all meet, and that by emphasizing the whole meaning of baptism that ground may be found, rather than by us fiercely contending for one part or aspect of it? It is here, I believe, that the whole trouble has been. We have seen but one side of baptism. The symbolical interpreter has seen it only as a beautiful symbol without any real significance, while the purely sacramentarian has thought of what it does, and all too frequently has neglected its symbolical beauty and power. In the light of the conclusive New Testament teaching that baptism is related to the remission of sins, let us inquire, as far as it is possible for us to know it, in what respect it thus stands related.

1. Baptism is an initiatory act based upon a solemn command of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus firmly established upon his authority.

This command is given in the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel in the well-known words of the great commission, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, 20). An objection is sometimes made that it is too much to base all our faith in the fact of baptism as a command upon this one verse. It is also urged that the earthly Jesus was not the one who gave the command, as, for example, he instituted the Supper, but that these words were supposed to have been spoken after the resurrection; therefore, their validity rests upon a previous faith in the resurrection, or presupposes that one believes in it before he could accept baptism. It is only necessary to reply that unless one

believes in the glorified Lord, in the Jesus who was raised from the dead by the power of God, baptism will have no interest for him. Baptism has interest for those who believe that Jesus died, that he was buried, and that he rose again. It is significant that those who do not believe in the atonement of the Lord do not practice baptism or the Lord's Supper. As to the position regarding the one verse, we can but reply that it is not necessary for a thing to be repeated over and over to make it valid. It was not necessary for the early Christians; they firmly believed that baptism was instituted by the divine authority of the Lord, and they preached it and practiced it as such. They at least had no doubt about the authority for their practice of the act. To them it was as we have described it, an initiatory act by which one became a member of the Church of the Lord, one based upon His solemn command. The very fact that baptism is a command of Jesus connects it with the remission of sins, for Jesus commanded only those things which were essential to a man's forgiveness. He was not imposing upon men requirements that were unnecessary. Every condition which He laid down had a moral reason, a moral significance. Whenever, therefore, we acknowledge that baptism is a command of the Lord Jesus, we at the same time acknowledge that obedience is necessary to salvation, for to "them that obey him he became the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9).

2. Baptism is a symbolic act,—a symbolic representation of the finished work of Christ for our redemption and the soul's experience in coming to Christ.

In the first Corinthian letter, Paul tells us that the great facts of the Gospel are three: the death of Christ for our sins, His burial in the new tomb, and His resurrection from the dead on the third day (I Cor. 15:1-5). In the Roman letter he describes the symbolic meaning of baptism when he says, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:3-5). What a wonderful symbolism he here describes! The three facts of the Gospel which make it a gospel of forgiveness are that Christ died and was buried and rose again from the dead. In baptism, the penitent believer, he who has died to sin, he who through the word of the Holy Spirit of God has experienced faith, and therefore the change of heart, is buried in a symbolical burial. To all intents he is dead. The breath ceases, the eyes are closed, he is apparently a dead man. As Jesus was buried in the grave in the garden, so this man, dead to sin, and dead symbolically, is buried in the baptismal waters. But Jesus did not remain in the tomb. We worship not a dead Saviour but a risen and glorified Lord. Jesus came forth from the grave into a glorious new life. So it is that the one who has died to sin and has been buried is now raised from the waters "in the likeness of his resurrection." Here then is the true symbolism of baptism. Forsythe truly states it

when he says that baptism "declared and enacted the whole Gospel and not merely an initiatory stage of it." [17] The symbolic schools have always been right in contending that baptism is a symbol; they have always been wrong in declaring that it is a symbol only, and in their understanding of what it symbolized. Dr. Candlish may be taken as representative of this school when he affirms that the "primary idea of baptism is the cleansing of the soul by washing." [18] With Dr. Candlish agree such men as Bruce and Holtzmann and a host of others who have been accustomed either to ignore all the verses which would appear in any way to suggest sacramentarianism, or to placidly assume that the views of the New Testament writers accorded with their own. To them, baptism is only a symbol, and a symbol of the cleansing of the soul by faith. Not only is it true that every New Testament writer who discusses the real character of baptism assigns another purpose to it, but there is not one who even suggests that baptism is a symbol of the cleansing of the soul. Baptism is a wonderfully suggestive symbol, but it was never a symbol of cleansing. It is a pictorial representation of all that Christ did for our redemption in His atonement on the cross, and of all that we do in coming to Him through our faith and repentance. Every conversion is a recapitulation of the experiences of Calvary. To be saved we must follow Jesus in death, burial and resurrection.

3. Baptism is a monumental act in which the glo-

[17] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 179.
[18] "The Christian Salvation," Candlish, p. 148.

rious atoning work of Jesus is continually and lovingly commemorated.

Here, indeed, is a living monument to the grandest facts in all the universe of God. Here in the baptism of men and women by the thousands every day is a witness to the fact that Jesus finished the work for our salvation, that He has accomplished it upon the cross. Every time one is baptized it is truly done "in memory of Him." "It is always a monument and attestation of the burial and resurrection of the Lord. No one can sensibly contemplate one exhibition of it without remembering the burial of the Messiah, and His glorious resurrection by the power of the Father, for it is the administrator that raises from the watery grave the buried saint. With the vividness of sensible demonstration it strikes not only the eye but the heart of an intelligent spectator." [19] In its symbolic and monumental significance there is irrefutable argument for the practice now of the so-called form which was indisputably practiced in the New Testament age. Only the immersion of a penitent believer and the resurrection of that believer from the waters can truly symbolize or portray the facts of death, burial and resurrection. That this form was the only one practiced in the New Testament times is quite universally acknowledged. Forsythe says of the act, "that it was the form of a bath." Even Dr. Candlish, though denying to baptism any other significance than a sign or seal of what has been already accomplished, acknowledges "that in some respects immersion would be the more

[19] "Campbell-Rice Debate," p. 441.

striking and impressive form." [20] It is difficult to understand why great and good men who believe that New Testament baptism was a bath, that it was a burial and a resurrection, and that such a burial and resurrection enacted to-day more truly symbolizes and is more truly monumental, should cling to substitutions which utterly fail to do the very things from the symbolic and monumental standpoint which baptism ought to do. It is far better to frankly acknowledge with the late Cardinal Gibbons that, while "for several centuries after the establishment of Christianity baptism was usually conferred by immersion, the practice of baptizing by affusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended by less inconvenience than baptism by immersion," [21] or with Dr. Candlish, who though admitting that immersion "is the ideal form of the ordinance," yet denies that the mode is of significance, and say that those who practice substitutions for this ideal ordinance should freely admit that they adopt sprinkling "because it is more convenient in our climate and our manners and customs." [22]

Surely it would be far more Christian to reverently practice the "ideal form of the ordinance" than to follow something as a substitute, which has no New Testament symbolic or monumental significance, and to do this in the name of convenience.

4. Baptism is a confessional act to which is attached the assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

[20] "The Christian Salvation," Candlish, p. 146.
[21] "Faith of Our Fathers," Cardinal Gibbons, p. 266.
[22] "The Christian Salvation," p. 146.

Baptism is a confessional act. Previous to this obedience we have stood before men and have with our mouths confessed Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10); in baptism that which we have confessed with our mouths is confessed in an act. And what is it that we confess? The answer is given in the burial and resurrection which we experience as we go down into the water and are raised from it, in symbol of His burial and His resurrection. In this act we confess that we believe in the heart of the Gospel: that Jesus died; that He was buried; and that He was raised from the dead. "The baptism which receives the seal of salvation is a baptism in which the name of Christ is confessed as the only ground of salvation. The name of Christ stands for what He is. To acknowledge His name in baptism is openly to declare dependence upon Him alone for salvation." [23] That confession which we made with the mouth, that confession in which we publicly came out before the world for all that Jesus is and means, is, in baptism, reënforced by a public act in which we symbolically reënact or recapitulate all the facts of Calvary, the tomb, and the resurrection morning.

The psychological effect upon the soul of such an experience as baptism is readily apparent. It is a great crisis in the life. The way to Christ is ended; the life in Christ begins. All the stirrings of the incipient faith, the anguish of godly repentance, now burst forth in one great act of life committal, of public declaration. It was indeed "a confession of the yoke of Christ, amid circumstances of solemn excitement which crystal-

23 "The Atonement, the Heart of the Gospel," Campbell, p. 190.

lized all the prior discipline in a soul's life bond. It clinched the relation. The engaged to Christ should be married. The previous instruction, the personal dealings of the older Christians, and the gracious movements of the neophyte soul, all worked up to a definite public act. They were gathered to a burning point of open decision on a high wrought occasion, in an age when such a confession meant no small courage, obloquy, and peril. There was final committal. The soul entered into life possession of what it had before but known or felt. The smoldering tinder burst into flame. The effect of such an individual act, in a sympathetic society, on a solemn occasion, was great, decisive, fundamental. But it was not magical. It did not depend on learning, owning, or hearing certain forms of words. It was psychological. It was a crucial experience in the spirit. It was the moral crisis, in a loving and spiritual society, of a psychological preparation maturing at a solemn moment which settled all the rest of life. It was the work of the Spirit." [24]

But let us note further the last part of the heading of this portion of our study. "Baptism is a confessional act to which is attached the assurance of the forgiveness of sins." [25] Suppose we know no more than this about it. Do we not know enough? Suppose we are conscious only that the Word of God plainly teaches that when this act is performed, there is no longer anything between us and the remission of our sins. Are we not assured of the very thing we have long wanted to know? Whether we like it or not, there is no doubt at all but that the New Testament

[24] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, pp. 187, 188.
[25] "The Atonement, the Heart of the Gospel," Campbell, p. 190.

writers and the New Testament Christians believed that in the act of baptism the certificate of remission was given. In this act, in some manner, the assurance was vouchsafed that they had entered into the realm where the saving power of the Lord Jesus operated and sins were done away. This was the conviction of Peter when to the Pentecostians he said, "Repent ye and be baptized for the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38), or of Ananias when he commanded Saul to arise and be baptized "and wash away" his sins. The seal of salvation was affixed when the believing penitent confessed his faith and repentance in an act which at the same time was a confession of all that the atonement of the Lord on the cross meant to his soul. It is significant once more to call to mind the fact that those so-called religious bodies which to-day deny to Jesus the place ascribed to Him in the New Testament writings, never practice baptism or the Lord's Supper. The reason for this, as we have before noted, is that they do not wish to confess what baptism and the Lord's Supper confesses, that Jesus is Lord and Christ by virtue of what He did on Calvary.

5. Baptism is a translational act by which we are translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13).

(*a*) It is an act indissolubly connected with the procuring cause of our salvation; an act based upon the atonement of Christ.

Baptism is connected with the atonement as effect is with cause. Without the atonement there would never have been any baptism. All of its meaning comes from what Jesus did as a finished work on the cross.

In our present study, we have been trying to come to the solution of the one real problem of a religious nature in the world, the forgiveness of sins. There are three things which are always connected in the circle of New Testament ideas, and so closely connected are they that one cannot be thought of apart from the other two,—the death of Christ, baptism, and the remission of sins. In all the sermons preached in New Testament times, there was one mighty refrain: the remission of sins. "This prominence given to the remission of sins is not accidental, and must not be separated from the context essential to it in Christianity. It is a part of a whole or system of ideas, and parts which belong to the same whole with it in the New Testament are baptism and the death of Christ. It does not seem to me in the least illegitimate, but on the contrary both natural and necessary, to take all these references to the forgiveness of sins and to baptism as references at the same time to the saving significance (in relation to sin) to the death of Jesus." [26] These noble words of one of the world's greatest Christian teachers are a clear expression of a fact readily recognizable, namely, that there is in New Testament language and ideas always a connection between baptism, the death of Christ, and the remission of sins. "It is not a sufficient answer to say that the connection of ideas asserted here between the forgiveness of sins or baptism on the one hand, and the death of Jesus on the other, is not explicit; it is self-evident to any one who believes there is such a thing as Christianity as a whole, and that it is coherent and consistent with itself, and

[26] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 59.

who reads with a Christian mind." The dignity and beauty of baptism will be more and more appreciated as we recognize the undeniable fact that it is always associated with the very heart of the Gospel. The necessity of its observance in the spirit of its New Testament environment will be impressed upon us as we remember that it derives all its significance from the passion of Him "who was made sin for us." [27] It can never degenerate into a mere meaningless symbol as long as we remember that it is based upon the finished work of Him who hung between the darkening heavens and the trembling earth for our salvation. This was the attitude of the New Testament Christians toward the act, for "every Christian knew that in baptism what his mind was directed to, in connection with the blessing of forgiveness, was the death of Christ. Both sacraments, therefore, are memorials of the death, and it is not due to any sacramentarian tendency in Luke, but only brings out the place which the death of Christ had at the basis of the Christian religion, as the condition of the forgiveness of sins, when he gives the sacramental side of Christianity the prominence it has in the early chapters of Acts. From the New Testament point of view the sacraments contain the Gospel in brief; they contain it in inseparable connection with the death of Jesus; and as long as they hold their place in the Church, the saving significance of that death has a witness which will not be easy to dispute." [28]

A very interesting study of some of the New Testament references reveals the relationship between the

[27] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 58.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61.

blood of our Saviour and the remission of sins. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Here is the indisputable affirmation that we are cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ. In the same strain writes Paul, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph. 1:7). It is needless to multiply scriptural references. It is universally acknowledged that according to its New Testament conception forgiveness is only in the blood of the Lord Jesus. But there are other statements which seemingly refer to remission of sins by other means. Note the words of Peter on Pentecost in the verse which we have often used in this discussion: "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Here we are told that we come to the remission of sins through repentance and baptism. The words of Ananias to Saul are the same in meaning, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Here sins are to be washed away in baptism. In the Revelation John says, "He loosed [or washed] us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. 1:5). Here then we have the following conclusion:

(1) We have remission in blood. We have remission in repentance and baptism.

(2) We are washed from sin in blood. We are loosed or washed from sin in baptism.

Since the blood of our Lord and repentance and baptism are for the same thing, the remission of sins, they must in some way be inseparably connected. This

connection we have affirmed all through the present discussion. Can we discover just what it is? In his letter to the Romans Paul gives us the answer, "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death" (Rom. 6:3, 4). In His death upon the cross our Lord shed His precious blood. In baptism, the penitent believer in Christ comes into (is baptized into) His death. In baptism, therefore, he comes into all the cleansing or washing which the death of Jesus brings. Just what that is we will consider later. It is sufficient here to notice that in the New Testament there is always a relation between the blood of Jesus, the act of baptism, and the forgiveness of sins. It will forever be impossible to divorce baptism from the death of Jesus. The Lord has placed it in that connection, and only when men cease to believe that Christ died for our sins will they cease to baptize for the remission of sins.

(*b*) It should also be remembered, in considering baptism as a translational act, that it is a real act, one in which something is done for us and to us.

There is always a danger of baptism degenerating into two extreme positions. In one direction it degenerates into an act of magic, where the sinner is saved in a magical manner; in the other it fades away into a mere symbolism in which there is no sacramental meaning at all. Many have fallen into these errors. The truth (as so often is the case) lies just about halfway between the two. Baptism is a symbol, and as such we have considered it. But it is more than a symbol; it is an act, a very real act, in which some-

thing definite and wonderful is done to and for the one baptized. It is well for a moment to consider the meaning of the unscriptural word, sacrament. Of the many definitions that have been given, Cave's is the best: "A sacrament is a means of grace, an instrument in the hands of the divine mercy for effecting that which no instrument could effect by its inherent power, —a material channel for a spiritual blessing." [29] Hold fast this definition, especially the last part of it.

It is also necessary that we understand just what is meant by forgiveness before we can understand just how baptism, by bringing us into the death of Jesus, brings us to the remission of sins. The popular idea of forgiveness is that it is something which takes place inside the heart of the believer. "It is regarded as an inward experience, a matter of consciousness; and men are taught to look within themselves for the evidence of it, and to find that evidence in the state of joy which immediately succeeds it. To one who has had this conception of the remission of sins and of the agency by which it is brought about, it must necessarily appear absurd to suppose that it is in any way dependent on baptism, unless, with the Romanists, we attach to baptism some kind of magical power to effect a change of soul." [30] But this idea of the remission of sins is nowhere found in the New Testament. It is not only unscriptural, but it is the very idea which has been productive of practically all the division in the church of God on the subject of the design of baptism. Had this been perfectly understood, it is doubt-

[29] "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," Cave, p. 459.
[30] "Commentary on Acts," McGarvey, p. 243.

ful if there had been divisions about baptism and the remission of sins. The Scriptures always distinguish between repentance and the remission of sins; "the latter is constantly assumed to be consequent upon the former and not included in it." [31] Repentance is an inward experience, like faith is an inward experience; remission of sins is something which takes place outside the soul of the penitent one. Such expressions as "repentance and remission of sins" or "the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins," or once more the words of Peter, "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins," all show that there is a difference between the inward experience of repenting and the act in which the remission of sins is vouchsafed. "Here is not only a very marked distinction between the two, but remission of sins is most clearly set forth as subsequent to repentance." [32]

The meaning of the word ἄφεσις translated "remission" further disproves the theory that remission is a subjective experience. It means, primarily, "to release, as from bondage, or prison, etc." Its secondary meaning when referring to sins is "forgiveness, pardon of sins, letting them go as if they had never been committed." Forgiveness or remission, then, is something which takes place in the mind of him who forgives, and not within the soul of the one forgiven. It can only be known to the one forgiven, as he who forgives communicates the fact through some medium of communication. In the case of our forgiveness by

[31] "Commentary on Acts," McGarvey, p. 244.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

the Father, it is "an act of the divine mind and not a change within the sinner himself. Further, it is an act which, from its very nature, cannot take place until there has already occurred within the sinner such a change of heart and purpose as can make it proper in God, even on the atonement in Christ, to extend pardon. In other words, the whole inward change which the sinner is required to undergo must take place before sin can be forgiven." [33] When this is properly understood, the apparent absurdity of connecting the remission of sins with baptism is removed. Practically all Christians, with the exception of those who belong to Rome, are convinced that justification is by faith. However, it is not taught that justification is by faith alone. This we have considered at length before. That justification, which involves also the remission of sins, is dependent upon faith as a condition, yet if justification is withheld until that faith has objectified itself or manifested itself in some outward act, the sinner is still justified by faith. It is faith, however, in action, and not merely faith as a state of mind. As long as faith lies hidden in the heart, it has no saving power. It is only as it comes forth in action that it is living or saving faith.

A study of certain scriptural passages will emphasize the position of baptism as a real act in which we are translated into a new state or relationship. We are baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), "into Christ" (Gal. 3:27), "into his death" (Rom. 6:4, 5), "into the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

[33] "Commentary on Acts," McGarvey, p. 245.

In all these statements there is clearly indicated a change of state or relationship. We are translated by the act of baptism from one position to another. We are baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." "The subject is here represented as in some way entering into the name, or into the persons represented by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This may be supposed to resemble an act of naturalization, in the fact that a person in that process is inducted into the possession of the rights of citizenship under a political institution. So Christ commanded the candidates to be immersed into the name of the whole Divinity, that is, into the privileges and immunities of the new kingdom over which the Messiah now presides, by the authority of the Father through the Holy Spirit. It is, then, a solemn and sacred enfranchisement of a believer with all the rights and privileges of Christ's kingdom." [34] There is thus in New Testament teaching no reference at all to baptism into a subjective experience whereby magic cleanses a man from sin. This would be baptismal regeneration, to which all Christian men must object. The change which baptism brings is a change of state purely, in which a man is translated out of the unforgiven state into Christ, "into the sphere in which His saving power operates." [35]

A beautiful emphasis has been given to the change of relation which baptism accomplishes by the study of the word in some of the papyri. These have shown "that where the phrase 'baptized into' occurs (e.g., Acts

[34] "Campbell-Rice Debate," p. 441.
[35] "The Atonement, the Heart of the Gospel," Campbell, p. 190.

9:16; 19:5; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) that the person baptized becomes the personal property of the divine Person indicated." [36] The person baptized is no longer his own, "he has been bought with a price," he is from this time on a δοῦλος, a bondservant of Jesus Christ. The act of obedience is a formal act in which something is done for us, an act in which the penitent believer, one who has experienced a change of heart through faith and repentance, is translated into Christ in whom, alone, there is remission of sin,—that act of obedience is baptism for the remission of sins.

Let us refer for a moment to the meaning of a sacrament as defined above. It was defined as "a material channel for a spiritual blessing." Of its own inherent power it can effect nothing; it is efficacious only as it is used in the hands of divine mercy. Through it God works our advantage. In this sense baptism is a sacrament. Of itself it can do nothing. Only as through it God works our salvation is it of advantage to us. And through it and in it we come to the death of Christ, so that it may be said that we were baptized into His death. In this act Christ makes over to us, assigns to us, all that His death means in saving power. Forsythe gives a splendid illustration. Think of two things, a word and the thought which it conveys. "A spoken word is the symbol or vehicle of a thought, but it is also the thought itself in action." [37] Baptism is the symbol, but it also conveys to us the death of Christ, as at the same time it conveys us into the death of our Lord. For baptism is not only a symbol, but

[36] Dr. Souter, quoted by Cobern in "The New Archeological Discoveries," p. 229.

[37] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 222.

as the word is the thought in action, so baptism is the death of Christ in action, a real thing in that through it Christ conveys or makes over to us all that His death means.

(3) If we may consider baptism as a translational act, from another standpoint we may say that it is the sacrament of the new birth, and regenerates in the same manner as birth gives life in the physical world.

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus connects regeneration with the birth of (or out of, ἐκ) the water, or baptism. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). A brief definition of regeneration will help us to understand better the relation of baptism to it. "The beginning of the divine life, being an entrance into personal union and fellowship with Christ, and so with God, is a moral change; it is a change of character and ruling disposition. It is not a gift of new faculties, or the creation of something additional in a man, but an awakening of new dispositions which prepare him for fellowship with God. And since the new life of divine fellowship is a life of holy love, the beginning of the new life consists in the awakening of holy love in the soul. But this thought must be added,—that this change is wrought by God, and consists of His own impartation of His own character." [38] The same author briefly defines regeneration in another sentence: "Hence regeneration may be defined as that work of the Holy Spirit in a man by which a new life of holy love, like the life of

[38] "An Outline of Christian Theology," Clarke, p. 376.

God, is initiated." [39] Now it can readily be seen that the act of baptism as such cannot for a moment regenerate in the sense in which we have just defined regeneration. It cannot and does not impart a holy love to the soul. The act itself cannot in a magical manner reproduce in the soul of the sinner a Godlike life. That life is produced only by the Holy Spirit through whom we are begotten. To be born of water and the Spirit means to be born of water and begotten by the Spirit. We say that a man is born of his father and his mother. But no man is born of the father. He is born of the mother, and begotten of the father. Hence the word ἐγένατω in the new versions is correctly translated, begotten, for we are begotten of the Father through His Holy Spirit. The Spirit uses the word which He has inspired. This is the meaning of that statement in I Peter, "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). James speaks in the same vein, "Of his own will he brought us forth (or begat us) by the word of truth" (James 1:18). Faith and repentance are brought to being in the heart through the word of truth, for "belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Faith cleanses the soul, for in the words of Peter, as he spake of God's dealings with the Gentiles, "He hath made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). When faith comes through the hearing of the word of Christ, the new life has been begotten in the soul, the believer is now begotten of God. John

[39] "An Outline of Christian Theology," Clarke, pp. 396, 397.

confidently affirms this to be true when he says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (I John 5:1). The new life then is not begun in the soul in the act of baptism. In this sense it can never regenerate. Baptism as an act is the act of birth, as we have been studying it, an act of translation. Birth does not give life; it translates that which was begotten through the Spirit into fuller and freer action. And yet, there is a sense in which baptism does regenerate,—not an ontological but a psychological sense. Unless that which is begotten is born, it will die. Birth, therefore, is essential to its continued existence. Unless that which is spiritually begotten is born, it will die. One of the best-known laws of our psychological world is the one which demands that we act vigorously upon every good resolve or good resolution itself will die. Unless, therefore, the faith which is begotten through the word comes out in act, unless it objectifies itself, it will perish, and in dying will compass the death spiritually of the one in whom it was begotten. Baptism stands related to the spiritual life as birth does to the physical life. "So the gifts of word and sacrament are the same,—forgiveness and regeneration, newness of life and desire. The difference is not in matter but in form. It is psychological rather than ontological. New Testament baptism was a relative goal, a crisis, a committal crowning the preparation by the Word. It was the recognition of spiritual adultness." [40]

But there is another thought without which it is impossible for us to realize just how baptism is related to the remission of sins as a translational act. We are

[40] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 190.

not only born out of one condition, we are also born into another. In physical life we are born out of the womb of the mother into the family. In baptism we are not only born out of the old life of sin, but we are born into the family of Christ. It is in this sense that "it is the sacrament of regeneration; which, however, it does not produce, but richly conveys by our personal adoption into its home." [41] Only as we come as babes into the new home where there is care and nurture will the new life grow and thrive; and only as we rise from the old life of sin into the family life which is in Christ will there be true regeneration. As an act "baptism does stamp the Church as distinct from the world. And it does say that the soul can never come to its true Christian self and take home the baptismal gift, except in the Christian society. We cannot think of regeneration apart from a church. By this visible incorporation of the individual into the community (and so far into Christ) it makes a practical declaration of a new birth as a foundation of the New Humanity." [42]

Truly, then, all our division in the matter of the design of baptism can so easily be healed if we will but take baptism in its New Testament significance. It is, above all things else, an act of translation, and as such is forever related to the remission of sins. We can preach it for the remission of sins as the early Apostles and evangelists preached it, for it does bring the prepared soul out of darkness into that realm where alone the saving power of the Lord Jesus is effective.

[41] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 196.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

We must not "seek an effect on the soul outside the psychological effect." [43] The preparation of the heart has been accomplished through the word. "The Word begins the process which baptism seals and sets, as at a certain age a boy becomes a youth with all that implies in social sensibility and new relations." [44]

III. WE CAN BUT BRIEFLY NOTICE THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PRACTICE OF SO-CALLED INFANT BAPTISM AND THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH OUR STUDY HAVE FORCED UPON US

It should be borne in mind, first of all, that there is no such thing in the New Testament as infant baptism. Since baptism was always a matter of faith, and upon a profession of faith, it was not even thought of by the New Testament writers. In commenting upon Romans 6:4, 5, Dr. Denney, in his last and noblest work, says, "The whole difficulty of understanding the passage has arisen from the fact that baptism has been taken in it, as if it were a thing in itself, whereas the only baptism known to the Apostolic Church, and therefore the baptism here spoken of, was that of believers solemnly and publicly declaring their faith in Christ. The death and resurrection with Christ are not in the rite of baptism, apart from faith, and with a view to the experience of them by faith; they are in the Gospel to begin with, and in the rite only through the faith which accepts the Gospel." [45] A little further on in the same work he says, "The prime necessity is to re-

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[45] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, p. 316.

member that the baptism of those days was the baptism of believers, and that the occasion on which the believer made public and solemn confession of his faith in baptism, calling upon the name of the Lord, and renouncing the life which he had hitherto lived, was normally an occasion of high and serious emotion." [46] Since the baptism of the New Testament was always the baptism of believers, and, as we have discovered in our study, for the remission of sins, it is not to be wondered at that the early Christians never even thought of applying it to infants. While believing that baptism of infants is to be found in principle in the New Testament (though he gives no references from the New Testament to substantiate his position), Dr. Forsythe says, "Most that I have said about the regenerative effect of baptism applies directly only to adult baptism. We have no other in the New Testament, as in other mission stages of the church." [47] Dr. Andrews ("The Place of the Sacraments in the Teaching of Paul") is even more emphatic when he says, "There is no shred of real proof that baptism was ever administered to infants in the apostolic age." [48] To the mass of testimony of modern scholarship, Dr. Stevens adds his word, "It is not probable that the baptism of infant children was practiced in Paul's time, or that the subject of its grounds or propriety was even considered by him." [49] After a brilliant exposition of the relationship existing between faith and baptism, and also a declaration of the New

[46] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, p. 318.
[47] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 198.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[49] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, p. 334.

Testament teaching, that in the act of baptism the Holy Spirit was given, Dr. Denney says, "The general practice of infant baptism has made it difficult to apply this circle of ideas in the modern church. When believing men, confessing their faith in baptism, were said in the apostolic age to receive the Holy Spirit, it meant that they had religious experiences of a powerful and moving character, due to Jesus and their faith in Him, and to the whole circumstances in which it was declared. But no part of this has any application whatever to the baptism of unconscious infants, and to speak of their regeneration by the Spirit in baptism is to use language which has no relation to the New Testament facts,—language which neither has nor ever can have any intelligible meaning." [50] If infant baptism, then, has no basis in the New Testament, it is upon those who believe in it and practice it to write the long articles in its defense. The affirmative in any such discussion belongs to those who by their practice of it have laid upon themselves the burden of its justification.

Now it should be remembered that if the conclusions of our study are correct, and baptism is related to the death of Christ, and through that death to the remission of sins, it cannot in any possible manner have anything to do with infants. This is what we have been trying to say all the way along. It is what all the best New Testament scholars of our time are saying. We have quoted often from Dr. Denney. Note him once more, "Baptism has always in view, as part

[50] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, p. 319.

at least of its significance, the forgiveness of sins; and as the rite which marks the believer's initiation into the new covenant, it is essentially related to the act on which the covenant is based, namely, that which Paul delivered first of all to the church, that Christ died for our sins." [51] If the relationship between the death of Jesus, baptism, and the remission of sins is the relationship which we find always obtaining in the world of New Testament ideas, then infant baptism has no foundation either in word or principle. It is only, therefore, by assigning to baptism a purpose other than that which we universally find assigned to it in the New Testament, that we can find warrant for the baptism of infants. Dr. Candlish recognizes this truth when, after sharply criticizing some of the bases upon which infant baptism has been supposed to rest, he says, "The truth is that all these theories are vitiated by the retention in some form or another of the idea of baptismal regeneration, whereas it is not until we are entirely rid of all notions of the outward act having any such efficacy, and regard it simply as a sign and seal of the renewing wrought by the direct agency of the Spirit, that we can perceive the reason and propriety of its administration to the infant children of professing Christians." [52] Dr. Candlish does not accept baptism in its indisputable New Testament significance, as we have found it universally exhibited. He believes that baptism is purely a symbol, and that we are not Christians because of anything of transla-

[51] "The Death of Christ," Denney, p. 97.
[52] "The Christian Salvation," Candlish, pp. 162, 163.

tional power in the act. With him the act has no sacramental meaning at all. To quote him again: "Thus the right of infants of professing Christians to be regarded as members of the church depends not on their baptism, nor on any profession or promises made on their behalf, but on their birth of believers; and they receive baptism, not that they may be made holy, or dedicated to God, or admitted to the church, but because they are already holy (I Cor. 7: 14), and members of the church visible, in virtue of their being children of believers." [53] In other words, we are born into the church. The regeneration of our fathers has made us regenerated beings. It is difficult to believe that such words were written seriously. Doubtless, courtesy must make us believe they were, but we cannot help but see in them the hard straits to which great scholars now and then are put to to defend unscriptural practices in the name of denominational prejudices. The point in which we are here interested is the fact that any defense of infant baptism to have any hope of success at all must ignore the New Testament meaning of the act. It cannot be shown that infants are sinners, or that baptism as such apart from faith and repentance could in any sense be for the remission of sins. Since an infant is not a sinner, and since he cannot believe and does not need to repent, there is no New Testament sense at all in which baptism can be applied to him.

[53] "The Christian Salvation," Candlish, pp. 163, 164.

IV. THERE ARE TWO CONCLUSIONS WHICH NECESSARILY FORCE THEMSELVES UPON US FROM OUR STUDY OF THE RELATION OF BAPTISM TO THE REMISSION OF SINS

1. Baptism to the modern man will stand or fall in proportion as he receives or rejects its New Testament significance.

As long as the atonement of Christ is the heart of the Gospel, and baptism is received as being fundamentally connected with that atonement, it will endure in the Church. If baptism is considered merely a symbol, having no vital connection at all with the fundamental things of the Gospel, it will in time be relegated to the scrap heap to which a progressive generation consigns its outgrown doctrines. It is evident, then, that the fundamental thing about baptism is its significance. What is it for? This is the question. If it be not related inextricably to the very heart of Christianity, then the sooner we throw it aside the better. What right have we to do in the name of Christ that which has no divine significance? To retain Baptism, then, the Church of to-day must accept it as the New Testament Church accepted it; its perpetuity depends upon this.

2. An acceptance of the indisputable New Testament position regarding baptism and the remission of sins will resolve into harmony all our present-day divisions on the subject.

Undoubtedly here is the key. It seems to me that Dr. Andrews creates an unnecessary dilemma when he refers to the impossible dualism in Paulinism, con-

sisting of spiritual and sacramental elements. While acknowledging that the New Testament writers universally believe baptism to be for the remission of sins, yet he writes, "We cannot live on a faith that is split up into two unconnected halves. We cannot travel at one and the same time along two parallel roads that never meet. We can never abandon the spiritual side of Paulinism. It is 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.' It is woven into the very tissue of our spiritual life. It is the faith in which we live and move and have our being. Before we can accept the sacramentarian position we must accomplish what Weinel regards as an absolute impossibility, we must discover the higher unity which combines the two apparently antagonistic strains of thought into an intelligible harmony." [54] But are there "two antagonistic strains of thought"? Is it not probable that that harmony already exists and that there is difficulty simply because of our interpretation of both the spiritual and the so-called sacramental sides of Paulinism? If we meant by sacramentarianism that baptism considered alone, as an act apart from faith and repentance, regenerates in the sense that it gives the sinner a new heart, then surely there could be no harmony with the acknowledged spiritual elements of the teaching of the great apostle. But Paul never considered baptism in that sense. To him it was not merely a physical act; it was a great spiritual act, the culmination of a great spiritual struggle in which the soul threw itself unreservedly upon the love of Christ. It was the spiritual act by which the penitent believer was "trans-

[54] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 156.

lated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). There is not one shred of evidence in the New Testament that Paul or any other writer ever believed that baptism regenerated as an act of magic. With all, it is a spiritual act through which the believer comes into covenant relationship with the blood of Christ, into the realm where the saving power of the Lord operates. Here, then, is the unity desired, in a whole-hearted acceptance of the plain sense of the New Testament Scriptures.

The divisions about the so-called form of baptism must also be settled in the last analysis, in the light of the relation of baptism to the remission of sins. Its symbolic meaning grows out of that relationship. This we have already considered at length. Dr. Denney, in his usual brilliant manner, speaks of this meaning of the ordinance: "But this symbolism of washing or cleansing is not the one of which Paul makes use in Romans 6. What he speaks of is being baptized into Christ, or, to put it as strongly and vividly as possible, death and burial with Him; the immersion represents resurrection with Christ, rising from the dead with Him to walk in newness of life. It is because this is what baptism means, and because all Christians have been baptized, that to live on deliberately in sin is for the Christian an inconceivable, self-contradictory, and impossible course." [55] When we realize this New Testament symbolism, there is but one form of baptism, and that the form which shows forth a burial and a resurrection. About this form there has never been any de-

[55] "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation," Denney, p. 315.

bate; the division has been occasioned by the introduction of other so-called forms in the name of convenience. A return to the New Testament meaning of baptism will bring about a return to its manifestly New Testament form. It is significant that much of the confusion about the meaning of the sacred ordinance is due to this very substitution of other forms for that which was commanded.

In the light of the fact of baptism for the remission of sins must we settle the division regarding infant baptism. The early fathers, understanding that baptism had this meaning in the New Testament church, tried to make out that infants were in some manner saved from their sins in the act, thus keeping intact the Christian sense. Origen says, "Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can the reason of the laver hold good in their case? According to that sense we have mentioned, even now none is free from the pollution, though his life be but the length of one day upon the earth. And it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that we are baptized." [56] The absurdity of this position was too manifest, and as the years passed, other means of justification for the practice were invented. But as far as the ground upon which the question is to be settled is concerned, Origen was right. There is but one way to retain infant baptism in the Church; to show that infants are sinners, and that in some way or another without faith or repentance baptism brings about remission of their sins.

[56] "The History of Infant Baptism," Wall, pp. 204, 205.

This, however, would be pure magic, the kind of baptismal regeneration to which every modern Christian must vociferously object. If we accept the New Testament meaning of baptism, there is an end of the practice of applying it to infants. If Christ and the New Testament, His revealed message, to us be the seat of authority, then the question can be easily settled; if it is not, we are in darkness, without light at all.

CHAPTER V

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Text:—"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it and brake it; and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it; for it is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:26-28).

Is the Lord's Supper related to the remission of sins? In these verses, our Lord, without a doubt, identifies the institution with the procuring cause of the remission of our trespasses, when He says that the cup is His "blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto the remission of sins." As we have already said of baptism, so we can say with equal force of the Lord's Supper, that if it is not vitally connected with the fundamentals of the faith, it will in time be discarded by a generation which demands that everything in religion have a moral reason for its existence. In our study of baptism as related to the forgiveness of sins, we found it to be a universal New Testament teaching that it is related to the remission of sins, because it brings us into the death of Christ or into the sphere where the saving power of that death operates. In other words, there is no under-

standing the act of baptism at all, apart from the death of Christ. The same contention must be made in regard to the Lord's Supper. The fact of the matter is that both baptism and the Lord's Supper are forms "into which we may put as much of the Gospel as they will carry; and St. Paul, for his part, practically puts the whole of his Gospel into each. If baptism is relative to the forgiveness of sins, so is the Supper. We are not only baptized into one body [I Cor. 12:13], but because there is one bread, we, as many as partake of it, are one body [I Cor. 10:17]. If baptism is relative to a new life in Christ [Rom. 6:4], in the Supper, Christ himself is the meat and drink by which the new life is sustained [I Cor. 10:3]. And in both sacraments, the Christ to whom we enter into relation is Christ who died; we are baptized into His death in one, we proclaim His death to the end of time in the other."

The question with which we began this discussion must undoubtedly be answered in the affirmative. The Lord's Supper does have to do with the remission of sins, because it has to do with the death of Christ. To this fact it owes its presence and power in the life of the Church of to-day. In the significance to faith of this connection, we will concern ourselves later; it is sufficient now to note the connection as a fact substantiated by all the New Testament teaching upon the subject.

There can be no doubt that Gospel music holds a permanent position in the worship of the Christian religion. What could we do without it? Truly, there are emotional and inspirational depths which can be

sounded only through the glories of a Gospel hymn. How vital, also, to the existence of the spiritual life are the messages in word, as they come Lord's Day after Lord's Day from the preacher. But transcending every other act of worship on the part of the Christian is the act in which all the realities of the Gospel of the Lord are kept before him in symbolism. In a word, a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper in its relation to our forgiveness is absolutely necessary to that growth in spiritual life, which every true Christian so earnestly desires. It is of solemn importance, therefore, that occasionally we advert to a re-study of this sacred theme.

In the present chapter, we will consider, first of all, the New Testament teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, and secondly, we will briefly review some of the theories of the institution as they are held in the churches at the present time, and lastly, in order that the New Testament position may be thrown more clearly into the light, we will attempt a constructive statement of the doctrine as taught in the Word.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING REGARDING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. Consider, first, the teaching regarding its institution.

We are aware of the fact that the beginning of the Lord's Supper has been a matter of great controversy among the critics, some of them even going so far as to contend that Jesus had nothing to do with the institution of it, but that it arose later in the love

of the Church for their departed Master. Every word in all the references in the Synoptics regarding its establishment has been tested again and again. One of the most ferocious attacks has been made on the statement attributed to the Lord, in which he connects the Supper with His death. "If Jesus did not say a word about His death at the Supper, then an ordinance which has its 'raison d'être' in the proclamation of His death, cannot, by any ingenuity, be derived from His words." It would be very difficult, however, to account for the rise of the Sacrament in the Church on any other grounds than that the Lord did call His disciples together on that passover night on which He was betrayed, and that He actually did say the words attributed to Him. It certainly could not be said that Paul was responsible for its beginning. It could not have occurred to Paul to say that this was to be a memorial of Christ's death, any more than it might have occurred to any one else. Paul, however, forever repudiates, with all the passion for truth of his great heart, any suggestion that the Supper, as he had introduced it at Corinth, had been in any way originated by himself when he says, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (I Cor. 11:23). There was a grave reason why Paul should refer to the origin of the Supper, in writing to the Corinthians. These Christians, so recently converted from all the horrors of paganism, "were taking liberties with it, perverting it into a celebration of their own, as if Paul had instituted it of his own notion and they might treat it as they pleased; and what he says is, 'It is not my ordinance, but Christ's.' It is on His own authority

it rests, and in His dying words its significance is declared. It would be more than extraordinary if, in conditions like these, Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the guise of a historical narrative, something which is entirely destitute of historical value. A person who in such circumstances could not or did not distinguish between matter of fact attested by evidence, and visions generated in the subliminal self, would not be a responsible person. We have no hesitation, therefore, in holding that Paul reproduces the apostolic tradition at this point, and does so in the full sense of its value as historical authority, connecting the Supper as he observed it with the Lord Himself." [1] There can be no doubt that the Supper of the Master was instituted substantially as it is stated in the Gospel narratives and by Paul in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians. To any one who believes there is a self-consistent Christianity, this matter will present no difficulties. There is nothing older than the so-called Sacraments, for in the time of Paul they were universally accepted as they are revealed in the New Testament. There had not even been a thought of controversy concerning them.

A question which should be answered here pertains to the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. The fact that it was instituted on the night of the Passover, and that its environs were such as to make the disciples think in sacrificial terms, makes the question one of interest. It may, for us, be stated as follows: "Is the Lord's Supper, in any way at all, connected with the sacrifices of the Old Testament and, therefore, entitled to be

[1] "Jesus and the Gospel," Denney, pp. 321, 322.

regarded as sacrificial?" There are three things which indicate that the Lord Himself intended the Supper to be thought of as in some manner a sacrificial act:—(1) the time of its institution, (2) the elements which He used, and (3) the words which He spake to the disciples. The time, as we have noted before, was that of the great Pascal Supper, the time when He was celebrating it with His disciples. Of this there cannot be even the shadow of a doubt. All the memories which were associated with this solemn feast, with the lamb which had been so carefully selected and slain, would of necessity color with sacrificial meaning the new feast which Jesus was instituting for His disciples. Again, the fact that our Lord used bread and wine as the elements in the Supper would immediately bring the sacrificial nature of the new institution to the minds of the disciples. Unleavened bread and wine formed the "common material of the minchah; and as far as the one element is concerned,—the sacred unleavened bread which was inextricably interwoven with thoughts of the Passover, the shew-bread and every offering of cooked meal which was made in the holy places by priest or layman,—its one connection for the Jew was with the rites of sacrifice." [2] Trained as were the disciples in all that sacrifice meant, the use of these elements, and especially when it is borne in mind that bread and wine were always accompaniments of the Pascal lamb, would turn their minds to a sacrificial view of what Jesus was doing as He broke the bread and gave them the cup. And then, also, the very words which He used would

[2] "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," Cave, p. 466.

have a sacrificial significance and would make them think of the new ordinance in sacrificial terms. The fact that He referred to the cup as the blood of the New Covenant which was shed for many for the remission of sins, and also that He tells them this is to be done for a memorial to Him. "The scene which, by way of contrast, Jesus called up by His reference to the New Covenant (that scene in the desert, when, in ratification of the first covenant, the law-giver sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices half upon the altar and half upon the assembled multitude) has already been referred to; the words imply that, with all the difference of ritualism, circumstances, and surroundings, there was some fundamental resemblance between the newly instituted rite and that ancient ceremony performed by Moses; there can be no contrast between utterly diverse things, and the contrast between the New Covenant and the Old, pointed to some latent bond of union. And it is also remarkable that the uncommon word 'memorial,' 'remembrance,' 'anamnesis,'—'This do for my memorial,'—was also employed in connection with sacrificial ceremonies of various kinds; the shew-bread was 'for a memorial,' the 'blowing of trumpets' was to constitute the burnt-offerings and festal-offerings a 'memorial' before God." [3] It is clear, then, that all the circumstances of the institution of the Supper would connect it in some very close manner with the sacrifices of the Old Testament times. It is thus evident that we may speak of the Supper as a sacrifice.

But in what sense was the Supper intended by our

[3] "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," Cave, p. 467.

Lord to be considered a sacrifice? We certainly cannot, for a moment, subscribe to the Romanist view that it is a sacrificium propitiatorium. We shall have occasion to refer to this more carefully when later we consider the various theories of the Supper as they have been developed during the unfortunate controversies which have arisen concerning it. But without doubt there is a sense in which the Supper may be loosely considered a sacrifice. Let us remember that the materials employed in this Christian rite were bread and wine. By this selection of bread and wine, and not flesh and blood, our Lord identified the Supper with the bloodless offerings of the Old Testament dispensation, those elements which were presented in company with the burnt offerings and the peace offerings. These offerings were made, not to propitiate or as sin offerings, but they were presented only after propitiation had been made in the sin offering by the effusion of blood. To the disciples, this would be clear, since they were trained in the conceptions of sacrifice. "Must not the conclusion have slowly but irresistibly dawned upon them, that this ordinance was a something only now become possible, since an atonement for sin was made once for all? The mere use of these symbols, after the long initiatory education of Mosaism, quite apart from the things they symbolized, would unerringly suggest that they were in some way connected with a finished atonement. If the Supper was a sacrifice, it was not a sacrifice for sin." It is here the Romanist errs most grievously, that he offers anew the very body and blood of the Lord, to God for his

sin, in the celebration of the mass; but more of this later.

One other thing which should be remembered in considering the significance of the Supper, and one, which, unfortunately, has not been always noted, is that it derives its meaning from the action of our Lord in instituting it. The significance has not been in the elements, the bread and the wine themselves, but rather in what Jesus did to them before the disciples. It is the symbolic action of the institution which has the eternal significance. It would be harder for our western minds to appreciate this as did the Jews to whom this custom of a symbolic action was quite intelligible. We would, perhaps, think it extravagant, but to them it was one of the most powerful ways of bringing a great truth to the soul. For instance, Jeremiah, in order to bring to Israel a realization of the terrible sorrow and calamity which was to come upon them, lays a yoke upon his shoulders (Jer. 27:2; 28:10). Ahijah, in order to express the fact that the kingdom was to be rent asunder, rends his own garment and gives ten pieces to Jeroboam (I Kings 11:30; Jer. 19). Yet another illustration is that which is found in the infidelity of the wife of Hosea; the tragedy of it illustrates the infidelity of the people of Jehovah. Just before our Lord instituted the Supper, He dramatically teaches the lesson of humility to the disciples, as He takes a towel and washes their feet. And thus it is in the Supper. It is Christ's last parable, but it is a parable acted rather than spoken. The spoken word had failed; it is now time to enforce the great truth by an action so lofty and sacred that it would forever

fix the words He had uttered so often. "This" means not the object, but the act. Remove the comma after "body," and you have, "This is my body broken." And this is what the Lord meant. As He took the bread and broke it, it is as if He said, "This action of mine is my body which is soon to be bruised and broken upon the cross."[4] And so, also, in the cup. It is not the cup itself, nor the contents of it, but the action. It is as though Jesus said, "This is my blood shed for you and through which you have life; its outpouring is my blood outpoured upon the cross. I pour it out for you, and you drink it into yourselves; this outpouring and your partaking is God's new covenant with you." How otherwise, unless this is the significance of it, could the Supper, in any way, be called a covenant or mutual act? If this could have been understood in the Church in the past, how much trouble might have been saved. I have attended communion services many times in which the fundamental significance of the Supper was overlooked. It is a symbolism of action and not of the contents at all, a parable enacted rather than spoken.

There is an interesting study in the words of the verse with which we prefaced this chapter. In these words, is the real significance of the Lord's Supper contained. The action of the Lord is expressed in strong terms set off by commas.

(1) "Jesus took bread."

Let us constantly remember that the bread is His body. What a wonderful advent was that of God into our world when He took a human body to be His

[4] "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," Cave, p. 467.

tabernacle. There was no other way for Him to speak to us in an intelligible manner. Only as He could partake of all that the flesh means in suffering could He bring to us the message we need. It is not difficult, then, to see in this action of Jesus as He takes the bread, that mightier act in His taking upon Himself our flesh. The incarnation, the atonement, baptism, and the Lord's Supper are so indissolubly linked together that we never can think of one without the others. Paul glories in the fact that our God took flesh, when he writes ecstatically to Timothy: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; he who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (I Tim. 3:16).

(2) "Jesus took bread, and blessed it."

His flesh and blood mean humanity. He took upon Himself our humanity, but our humanity without sin, for He blessed it. He sanctified and redeemed it. It is the redeemed and blessed humanity which we are to be as He dwells in our hearts, the righteousness of God in us. Living without sin, though in a sinful world, and tempted in all points as we are tempted, He glorifies our flesh. He gives unto us the conception that this flesh is, indeed, the temple of the Holy Spirit. As, therefore, we see Him in the Supper, blessing the bread, we can see the even more glorious blessing of our flesh as He comes into it and lives in it the life of pure godlikeness.

(3) "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it."

It is a broken loaf of which we eat, and a poured out

cup of which we drink. We cannot eat the loaf whole. The body which He took upon Himself was broken. Without such a breaking, there is no redemption. It was an inevitable spiritual necessity that Christ should die. Yea, it was a necessity in God Himself. "The tragic is nature's law which cannot be evaded by an immanent God." We cannot give gifts of blessing to humanity without giving ourselves. This has, many times, been tried, but never has it been done. We cannot give any gift of blessing without giving ourselves and all that we are. "Just as truly as food must be destroyed before it can be of use to us, so He had to be destroyed before he could savingly serve us. We must be broken ere we deeply bless. Self-will, self-seeking, self-love, must be broken (by whatever judgments) in a diviner love, else every other contribution we offer, even for the purpose of Christ, is rejected by God. We try to escape this, to compound, to evade, to give things while withholding self. But all the courses of Heaven move against such a man. As Christ broke His bread, so He gave His body to be broken. As His body was broken, so was His heart. As His heart was broken, so was His self-will. Without this breaking, there is no redemption, no share in redemption." [5] So when we come together on the Lord's Day, that we may assemble around His table in our act of breaking the bread, let us keep before us just what it means,—His body broken for us.

(4) "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples."

[5] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 321.

Here was an act in which all that the death of the Master meant was, in prelusive manner, assigned to His disciples. It was as though He had said, "I am going to die for you, that through my death you may have life, and now I am conveying to you this death in advance." Jesus was born to die. It was in His blood. If He had not died, He would have lived a false and untrue life. The cross is not a mere influence, a mere showing of God's love. It is a real thing. It does something. And that which it does Jesus would give to His disciples. He gave himself. Never did He spare Himself. His death was the result of a life of absolute obedience to God. To live in order that He might be sacrificed would be immoral, but to die as a part of His great mission was sublime. The whole life of the Master was one long self-giving. How dramatic and meaningful is this action when, as it were, He makes over to them in advance all that His death was to mean to them in blessing.

(5) Jesus not only gave the bread to His disciples, but they were to eat it. All the power to live the life of godliness comes from the one who is the vine. That life which flows into the branches cannot flow save as it comes from the source of the new life, and Jesus is that source. He is the head of the new humanity, as Adam was the head of the old sinful humanity. And this new institution, so simply established and yet so wonderful, was to be a perpetual reminder to the disciples that only as they ate of the Lord, as they were rooted and grounded in Him, could they have life in themselves. "He is broken in vain if He be not, as crucified, eaten and co-mingled fully

with our life and soul. He is not, for us, effectual till He is in us; he does not fully bless us until He occupy us." [6] Thus, always can we realize the deep solemnity of this act which we celebrate each Lord's Day; it is a real act, as baptism is a real act, an act created by the indwelling presence of Christ, and as mystic and wonderful as He was.

II. A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE GREAT THEORIES OF THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

1. The Roman Catholic Doctrine.

The Romanist doctrine of the Lord's Supper may be summed up in four propositions. We have but little space here to devote to its consideration. Our only purpose in dealing with these theories is that we may throw into stronger light the New Testament meaning of the Supper in its relation to the remission of sins.

(*a*) First, then, the Lord's Supper in the New Testament is everywhere taught as a representation of the Lord's death. This is universally acknowledged. Where it is not so expressly stated in the writings of the Apostles or Evangelists, it is clearly implied. By a process of transubstantiation consequent upon the priestly consecration, the Supper is actually, each time it is observed, a re-presentation of the actual body and blood of the Lord.

(*b*) In the second place, the Supper is a sacrament, but one not in the ordinary sense of the term alone. It is not merely a channel through which the Master

[6] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 325.

blesses us, but it has a potency of its own, since it is the actual body and blood of Jesus. Whatever power the body and blood of the Lord has, the Supper has, since by this process of transubstantiation it has by priestly consecration been changed into the actual body and blood of the Saviour.

(*c*) Thus, in the third place, the Supper is a true, a propitiatory, sacrifice. It is as much an offering for sin, every time it is celebrated, as were the offerings of like nature in the Old Testament, in fact, it is as an offering for sin which all these dimly foreshadowed. This, in a word, is the Roman Catholic doctrine of the mass.

To any one acquainted with the teachings of the New Testament regarding the meaning of the Lord's Supper, the weakness and utter absurdity of such a position is readily apparent. The criticisms of this position have been so concisely and clearly summed up by Dr. Cave that I follow him closely here.

(1) First, with all its claims to perspicuity, the Tridentine Doctrine of the Supper is utterly at sea, for the elements employed cannot be at the same time the body and blood of Jesus and the symbols of that body and blood. The doctrine defines the death of Christ as in reality a sacred fact, with its adjuncts, the broken body and the shed blood, but at the same time it says that under the form of the bread and wine there exists the very body and blood of the Lord, together with His soul and divinity. This is simply to say words without meaning, for it is evident that the bread cannot be the symbol of the body of Christ, and at the same time the flesh of the Lord in reality,

nor can the wine be a symbol of the blood of Christ and at the same time the very blood.

(2) A second objection to the Romish theory may be stated in a sentence. If the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Supper "is founded upon a literal interpretation of the words, 'This is my body,' consistency demands that there should be a strictly literal interpretation of the words which accompanied the distribution of the wine. The previous objection was based upon a misuse of language, this on a hesitant method of Biblical interpretation."

(3) A third objection to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Lord's Supper is that to call it a propitiatory sacrifice is directly contrary to all the Old Testament teaches about sacrifice, and also to the many express statements of the New. We have already noted the fact that there is a sense in which the Supper may be thought of as a sacrifice,—a very loose sense. That is, it has some parallelism with the Mosaic rites of presentation. The very absence of blood from the ritual, and the absolute silence of the whole New Testament on anything which would even suggest it, warrants us in contending that in no sense at all was it ever intended to be considered a sacrificium propitiatorium.

(4) There is, further, no warrant for the position that the Eucharist is the antitype of all the sacrifices in the Old Testament. The sacrifices in the Old Testament were but shadows of things which were to come, they were transitory, but for a little while, and were to pass away. The death of Christ is the completion of them, and in His death he nails the old Law

to the cross; it is done away. But to find in the Lord's Supper the fulfillment of all that was predicted is to narrow the whole thing down to a point at which no student of the essential significance of the Mosaic institutions can accept it.

(5) A last and powerful objection to the Real Presence theory is directed at the necessity for the priestly consecration in order to the transubstantiation. This is to multiply miracles where there are already too many to be accepted. A sacrament is "a symbol which works the effect of the thing symbolized by the gracious intervention of the Father of Mercies; why, then, is it found necessary in this case of the Eucharist to define a sacrament as a symbol and more than a symbol, which works its effect by its individual potency?" If a Romanist finds the whole meaning of the Supper in a spiritual application, why is it necessary to confuse and enlarge the meaning of a sacrament here? Why is it necessary for the priest to do that which, if it is a sacrament at all, the Father Himself can do? If it is a sacrament, the Father can and will work through it and nothing that the priest can do will make any difference.

2. The second theory of the Supper, which we can note in passing, is the Lutheran. In reality, as far as the faith in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper is concerned, there is no difference between the Romish Church and the Lutheran. With the Church of Rome, and the Greek Church as well, the Lutherans have believed that Christ is in the elements of the Supper in a real and tangible sense. They differ, however, in that while the Roman and

Greek churches teach that there is an actual change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ immediately consequent upon the priestly consecration, the Lutheran Church teaches that under the bread and wine is the presence of the body and blood of the Lord. This, in short, is the theory of con-substantiation. A summary of the doctrine as universally held by Lutherans may be made in a sentence. First of all, the Lord's Supper is truly a symbolic representation of the death of Jesus; secondly, it is an actual representation of what the cross means to us; and thirdly, it has some peculiar sacramental power, not only as an instrument through which the Father works our advantage, but because it is in some manner impossible of explanation, the actual body and blood of Christ. In the word of Dr. Cave, "The same criticisms which invalidate the Romish theory affect this. Thus, in the first place, the theory is based upon an inconsistent literalism; secondly, it admits confusion into the idea of a symbol; thirdly, it adduces an unnecessary adjunct to produce an effect purely sacramental." In its main premise the theory, therefore, is out of harmony with all the plain New Testament teaching upon the subject.

3. It will be well, in passing, that we may throw clearer light upon the glory of the New Testament position, to note the theory of Zwingli. To this godly man there was no real presence of Christ in the Supper, nor does the Christian in partaking of it partake of Christ in any sense at all. To him, the Supper was purely commemorative or symbolic. How lucidly he expresses his belief, "The Supper of the Lord is no other than a feast of the soul; and Christ instituted

it as a remembrance of Himself. When a man trusts himself to the passion and redemption of Christ, he is saved; a sure visible sign of this He has left in the emblems of His body and blood, and bids them both eat and drink in remembrance of Himself." The Supper is thus an act in which those who know themselves to be saved by the blood of Jesus announce the fact to the world. In the words of Paul, they "do show forth the Lord's death until he comes." The unity of the Church was also shown forth in this act, and to this Zwingli was committed. In a word, he believed that the Supper was a commemoration or a symbol testifying to the world concerning the fact of our salvation in Christ, but that it had any so-called sacramental power he denied.

4. The Socinian theory was so closely allied to the Zwinglian that a sentence will express it. Like the Zwinglian, it denied any sacramental potency in the Eucharist, although it did contend for the symbolic or commemorative nature of it. To come together for worship and to take of the Supper is good for the soul because it sets our minds on the sacrifice which Christ made for us. It is good to exhort one another to pure life, and nothing so contributes to this as the act of publicly thanking Christ by partaking of this memorial feast. There is no other power in the Supper save this, that it psychologically affects us,—those of us who meet together and partake together.

5. The theory of John Calvin and the Reformed Churches is the one adopted in "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," by Cave. In a word, it is that the Lord's Supper is a memorial, a mighty symbol of what

Christ did; but, at the same time, it is sacramental in that through it there is actually a sacramental application to the soul of the merits of the death of the Saviour. The Supper really affects something; it is not symbolic alone.

A study of these various theories, brief though it has been, will enable us to see in clearer light the true meaning of the rite as it is taught in the New Testament, and prepares us for a more careful probing of the doctrine.

III. A CONSTRUCTIVE STATEMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING UPON THE LORD'S SUPPER IN RELATION TO THE REMISSION OF SINS

There is but one question with which we are now concerned. Is the Supper, in any way, connected with the remission of sins? If it is so related, in what way is that connection manifest? It is only to ask in other words, Is the Eucharist sacramental? Let us remember that the men to whom it was presented, with whom it was instituted, were Jews, those to whom the sacrificial significance of the Old Testament sacrificial rites were familiar. Interwoven with every shred of their mental and spiritual make-up, deeply imbedded in their reverence, were these very rites and their sacramental meaning. On the very face of it, then, it would seem that this action of our Lord was a direct appeal to that attitude of heart and mind. The question is whether this acknowledged Passover of the New Testament would not carry the minds over to a sacramental potency. Was it not actually selected by the Master Him-

self in order that the thoughts of His Apostles might be so directed? If these Apostles regarded the ancient rites as having to do with the remission of sins, would they not thus regard this new institution which was so closely connected with the procuring cause of such remission, that to take this meaning out of it would be to reduce it to nothingness? It is impossible to see how they would escape realizing that this act, while it was a memorial, was something more; that, as they observed it week by week, it actually brought them in some way to the flowing fountain of blood in which they could wash and be clean. But let us examine it more in detail.

1. The time of the celebration of the Lord's Supper is significant. It is evident from clear statements of the New Testament and also from the teaching of church history that the disciples of the Lord met each Lord's day for the purpose of observing the Eucharist. Luke tells us in the second chapter of Acts that the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost "continued steadfastly in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers" (Acts 2:42). While there might be a possibility that this does not refer directly to the Lord's Supper, the preponderance of the probability is on the other side. If it does not refer to the observance of the memorial feast, it is hard to explain just what it is to which it does refer. In line with the same thought, is the statement in the twentieth chapter of the same book, "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them" (Acts 20:7). There is but one first day

of the week, and it comes every week. It is evident from the very construction of this verse that the meeting on the first day to celebrate the Supper was a customary action. It is not that they came together occasionally to remember their Lord in this appointed manner, but the reason for their meeting was that they might do this. To observe it at some time which the church may designate makes the whole action a matter of convenience rather than of conviction. Pliny the Younger, Proconsul of Pontus under Trajan, in writing to the Emperor, seeking information concerning his future treatment of the Christians, says, "They met again in the evening (the Lord's Day) at a simple and innocent meal." "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," that primitive church manual which so stirred the world of Christian scholarship a half century ago, has this significant statement concerning the Supper, "Coming together on the Lord's Day break bread and give thanks, confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure." For more than seven hundred years, the Lord's Supper was observed by the Church each Lord's Day. Concerning the change of its time of observance, John Calvin says, "The change is a contrivance of the devil." John Wesley urges, "Spread the table every week." From an overwhelming mass of testimony, it is indisputable that the early Church observed the Supper every week, and that the reason for their assembly was not that they might hear a sermon but that they might observe the Supper. It is a question whether or not they would have observed this feast so faithfully and so frequently if it had been a memorial feast only. There is a hint here that the

disciples felt the Supper to be in some manner actually and really connected with the remission of sins. Unless it were in some sense sacramental, it is doubtful if it would have remained in the Church until the present hour. Mere forms, even though they are of memorial character, do not as a rule have such a life as this.

2. We are now prepared to summarize in a few statements the evident significance of the Lord's Supper in its connection with our constant forgiveness.

(*a*) It is apparent that the Lord's Supper is a communion.

So the Apostle Paul declares it to be: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10: 16.) Truly it is a communion with Christ. It is close spiritual intercourse with Him, a fellowship with His sufferings. As we partake of the bread broken, we become partakers of His broken body, of all the suffering which brings us life. As we partake of the cup, we have communion with the blood which for us was poured out. But it is not only a communion with suffering and death; it is more than that; it is a communion with life, His life. "As baptism is the sacrament of our uniting, so the Lord's Supper is that of our continuous and constantly renewed union and communion with God through Christ. They are both sacraments of life, i.e., of our union with the life who is Christ. They enable us to say that we are in Christ, and that Christ is in us." [7] And how pro-

[7] "The Soteriology of the New Testament," Dubois, p. 180.

pitious is the environment of the Supper, when observed in the New Testament manner, for just this communion,—this close spiritual fellowship with the Saviour, which is so vital to the continuance of our life in Him. Everything seems to conspire to the end that we shall be drawn close to Him. In the first place, it is observed on the Lord's Day, that day which is forever memorable because it witnesses to His victory over the grave, and His resurrection unto glory. It is decidedly His day, sacred and holy and glorious. On this day, His people, the best in the world, that new humanity of which He is the head, have gathered in His house, a house dedicated through sacrifice and faith and tears to His service, and around His table spread with the emblems of His broken body and shed blood. Here are all the personal possessions of the Master brought together. If, in an atmosphere created by such conditions, a redeemed soul cannot commune with Jesus, it is impossible to imagine conditions where this result could be obtained. And such communion is just that which will evoke the repentance from sin, which is necessary before the Christian can be cleansed from it. As Christ died for sin, so in our communion with Him we die to sin and are purged by His blood. Hence, even in the act of communion, there is a purging and cleansing of the soul. There is in it all a true connection with the remission of our sins.

(*b*) The Supper is also a time of examination. It calls for meditation and introspection. How clearly illustrative of this fact is the statement of Paul, "But let a man prove (or examine) himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (I Cor.

11:28). True heart searching which leads to repentance is the spiritual condition necessary to a proper observance of the Supper. In the light of the cross to which the emblems of the broken body and shed blood turn the mind of the believer is he to turn the white light of meditation upon his own heart, and in the glare of its unsparing beams resolve anew to live the life with Him. How necessary to repentance that we see our sin as sin. This is the crying need of the hour, when we are so entangled with the cares of the world, with social pleasures, with business. We need time for meditation, for heart examination. It has been my own experience that there is no time when I can do this so well as that when the loved ones in Christ, in His house, and on His day, surround His table. This very time of examination evokes repentance and prayer, and repentance and prayer bring to forgiveness the sinning Christian. Hence, its relation to the remission of sins is once more evident, in that it each week brings us back to the procuring cause of our salvation.

(*c*) The Lord's Supper is also a great confessional act,—a constant proclamation of the glorious fact of the atonement of Christ for our sins, and a declaration of the Christian's faith. Paul affirms this in the words, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). Ye do show forth, or proclaim, or better, publish, the death of Christ. Here the whole act is conceived as confessional in nature. And so it is a confession of our faith in the very heart of the Gospel, those facts without which there never has been

a Gospel. It is significant that the pseudo-Christians, those who claim to be Christians and yet deny to Christ the place universally accorded to Him in the New Testament, never practice baptism nor the Lord's Supper. To this we have alluded in our consideration of the relation between baptism and the remission of sins. And why do they take this attitude? The reason is obvious. They do not celebrate the Lord's Supper because they do not believe in that which the Lord's Supper memorializes, in that which the act of partaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup celebrates. They do not believe that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. How then can they partake of the broken bread which publishes this fact? They do not believe that, in any sense, His blood was shed for the remission of sins. How then can they partake of the emblem which shows this forth? Dr. Stevens has stated it exactly, when he says of Paul and his attitude toward the institution that "the Supper was to him a perpetual sign and confession of the benefits conferred by the Lord's redemptive work." [8] Every time we assemble with those like-minded with us, in the sacred place where we are to meet Him, we are confessing to the world and to the Church our undying faith in these redemptive acts of our Master, which brought to us our glorious salvation. To the eye, we preach the Gospel in an act, the Gospel of Him who died for our sins and was raised for our justification.

And it will not be digressing here to emphasize the fact that we have an engagement with our Lord at

[8] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, p. 336.

His house on His day. If I were invited to dine with the King of England or with the President of the United States, I would consider the invitation one of great honor, and I would allow nothing to interfere with my keeping that engagement. Should I not be as eager and as careful that I do not miss the special meeting with my Lord at His table? How much of spiritual power is lost because of the indifference and carelessness of Christians in the observance of the feast.

(*d*) The Eucharist is a bond of union. So Paul considered it, and so he speaks of it: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of the one bread" (I Cor. 10: 16, 17). The one loaf, or bread, represents the spiritual unity of believers in Christ. The one body is referred to by Paul, again and again. Without doubt, the one bond which, more than anything else, held the early Christians together during the awful days when the persecutions of fiendish Roman Emperors sent thousands of them to death was the observance of the Supper. Without ministers, they met together in the catacombs or in secluded places, and broke the bread, and partook of the cup, and were one. They held together in their common relationship to God through Jesus Christ the Lord. "The common symbol of which all partake suggests the common participation of all, in those gracious benefits which are symbolized, and

thus designates the unity of the participants." [9] I cannot but believe that one of the prime necessities for a reunited church is the restoration to its New Testament place and meaning, and to the New Testament time of its observance, of the Lord's Supper. It is true that Jesus did not specify the time of the Supper, saying only, "As often as ye do this, do it in memory of me." But did He not, by omitting to set a time, leave this to the love of His disciples? And out of their love for Him they came together on His triumph day, the day of His resurrection. Since they were closer to Him than we are, and since no day more expressive of its meaning could be chosen, we contend for its observance on this day. As the day commemorates the resurrection, so the Supper commemorates the death for our sins. Thus, every Lord's Day the three great facts of the Gospel,—the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord,—are commemorated.

(*e*) The Lord's Supper is a glorious time of cleansing for the Christian. For this very position we have been contending throughout the whole discussion. Remember that as Christians we sin daily. Because we have become Christians does not mean that we will never sin again. Sadly must we acknowledge that too often we fall into temptation. We sin grievously. John teaches us that "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Two wonderful results follow from walking in the light; we have fellowship with each other, we are bound together, we are one people;

[9] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, p. 336.

and as we thus walk, we are cleansed constantly by the blood of Jesus, the Son of God. This means that the sinning Christian is cleansed, as well as the alien sinner, in his act of coming to Christ. The Lord's Supper is sacramental because of the fact that it is indissolubly connected with the death of Christ; it derives all its meaning from this connection. What is made over to us, or conveyed to us, "or appropriated to us in the death of Christ is his power, especially in the forgiveness of sins." And so it is that "he who receives the death of Christ in its efficacy, the forgiveness of sins, enters into mysterious connection with the body of Christ itself, since the forgiveness of sins is the power inhering in the body of Christ." [10] This very thing we have been contending for in the whole discussion, namely, that the Lord's Supper is not merely memorial, but sacramental as well. There can be no doubt but that the early Christians so conceived it, as the many strong hints imply. Anything which is so vitally related to the very center and heart of the Gospel, to those facts without which there is no Gospel at all, is related to that for which Jesus came, and lived, and suffered, and died. Surely this is what He meant when He said that the cup "is the blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many unto the remission of sins." The whole act is one which we repeat, and by repeating bring before us that which lifts us to Him who is our Lord. "Baptism is not repeated; the Lord's Supper is. The difference lies in their nature. Baptism is the sacrament of the new birth, and birth begins life once for all. But the Lord's Supper is the

[10] "The Christian Salvation," Candlish, p. 199.

sacrament of the new life continued, and this is by the repeated gift of grace. The life, both of the individual and the community, must be sustained by constant recurrence to its source. In baptism, the Church gathers all together in one basal act, corresponding to the forgiveness and reconciliation of the world once for all in the cross as the final creation of the New Humanity; but there is also the daily and particular forgiveness, and corresponding to that, the Church in the other sacrament acts in an exercise frequent and particular." [11]

Most Protestants would revolt at the doctrine of the real presence or that elements actually become body and blood of the Lord, and yet, it seems to me, we have really lost something here. There is a sense in which Jesus does dwell in the bread and the wine, for the Church is His body, and through His Holy Spirit He dwells in that body. Not that He lives or dwells in the accidents of the Supper, in the elements as such, but in the action there is the real presence of the Lord to bless us. If there is not this presence for our blessing, then the whole argument which we have been trying to make,—that the Lord's Supper is sacramental,—that it does have to do with the remission of sins of the sinning Christian,—has failed of its purpose. Dr. DuBose has so well stated this attitude toward the Supper that I quote him at some length here. "In speaking of what I have called the literal and real truth of the language of the sacrament, I have, perhaps, failed to make a distinction which ought to be made between the terms 'literal' and 'real.' 'This is my

[11] "The Church and the Sacraments," Forsythe, p. 259.

body' may express a very real without expressing a literal fact. The doctrine of transubstantiation seems to me to assume that the real truth of our Lord's words is inseparable from their literal truth. The doctrine of the real presence assumes a reality which is separable from mere literalism and which is not less real and far higher for being so separated. Every 'verbum Dei' must be what it means, but it must be so in the sphere or order of being in which it is meant or intended. We speak of knowing Christ, but Paul says that we do not longer know Him,—*κατά σάρκος* but only *κατά πνεῦματος*. Our Lord Himself spoke of our continuing to see Him, hear Him, etc.; and we do not doubt that we do so in a very real, although not in a literal, sense. We do not see or hear or know Him with natural or literal eyes or ears or understanding. Not only is the Christ Himself now *κατά πνεῦματος*, but His whole relation to us is only as we are *κατά πνεῦματος*. That is, He is related to us and we to Him, we know Him, we receive Him, through the organs and functions of our spiritual and not of our natural lives. As we do not, literally and yet really, see and hear Him, so we do not, literally and yet really, eat and drink Him. We receive, assimilate, and convert Him into our very selves, none the less, but far the more, because we do not do so through natural mouths and stomachs. We receive Him as really through the organs and functions of our spiritual lives as we receive natural food through the organs of our natural life. And, moreover, we receive Him in the sacrament, in which the bread and wine are to us His flesh and blood. The very purpose and

use of the sacrament is to represent and to be to us the objective element and part in our spiritual life,—that which we receive as the condition of what, through it, we are to be and do. It is to save us from the heresy and vanity of a purely subjective spiritual life, a life by our own act or state of mind, instead of which it makes our life an act of Christ, entering into and incarnating Himself in our acts and states of mind. But how shall Christ thus objectively come to us except in some objective act? How can He speak to us with some language and appear to save in some symbol of His presence?" [12] Dr. Stevens is right when he says "that the bread and wine were thought of in the language of institution as symbols of Christ's body and blood, is evident from the fact that He was bodily present with those to whom He spoke the words, and any other sense of the words would have been absolutely unintelligible." [13] While this is true, however, it does not at all preclude our receiving Christ in a real sense, as present in this sacrament, as He is in His body, the Church, for assuredly this act is an act of His body. It is against the theory that the Supper is only monumental or memorial that we are contending. In reality, it will all depend upon what one thinks of the atonement of the Lord as to his position on the sacramental nature of the Supper. If he believes the cross to be only a glorious example of religious impressionism, it will be easy for him to think of the Supper as purely symbolic and memorial. If he sees in the cross something actually done or accomplished

[12] "The Soteriology of the New Testament," DuBose, pp. 387, 388.
[13] "The Pauline Theology," Stevens, p. 335.

for us by the Lord, then will he find in the Supper a sacrament or means through which the divine power works our forgiveness and spiritual advantage.

(*f*) The Lord's Supper is a wonderful pledge of immortality and of the second coming of the Lord.

The Supper is memorial. This we will consider in detail later. But it is not only memorial, it is anticipatory, it looks forward to the coming of the Lord in triumph to bless His waiting Church. This is the meaning of the words of Paul, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). How long are we to do this? Till He come. Surely it is clear, from hundreds of Scriptures, that He is coming. When we do not know, and how foolish and misleading is it to set the time of His return. But that He is coming again none will deny, if they believe Him and His word. And this feast is to be observed until He comes again. Here is a pledge, a tangible token, that He whom death could not hold will come again to us, bringing the gift of eternal life. Here are the memorials of His broken body and His shed blood. But these should not make us think only of a dead Christ. We worship not a defeated Lord, one who succumbed to the death of the cross and whose ashes lie in an unknown grave under the Syrian stars. He is the living and exalted Lord, and we do not understand the meaning of this token which He has left unless we think of it as bringing a new life from Him who was dead but is alive forevermore. Every time we take of the bread and drink of the cup we have a pledge that He is coming again and that He will

take us with Him in life eternal, in that city where they need no sun.

(*g*) The Lord's Supper is a memorial. This we have been noting all through our discussion; but let us now consider it from this standpoint alone. Jesus knew there would be grave danger that, entangled with the cares of the world, with the toils of business life, with the temptations of a wicked generation, His disciples would forget Him. He wanted to be remembered, yea, upon this being remembered depended the success of His whole mission in the world. If His disciples did not remember Him, all would be lost. Therefore, He leaves them this memorial of Himself, this action by which they could constantly keep in mind what He had done. Let us remember that the bread and wine are not memorials of Christ's body and blood as such, but rather of the body broken and the blood shed. It is to "show forth the Lord's death," that is, it is a memorial of His death. Take the death of Christ out of it, and you have nothing left. It is a memorial of what Christ accomplished on the cross, and its observance, week by week, brings to the mind of the believer all that Calvary meant.

How powerful in inspiration to deeds of courage and love is a memorial. I stood one day upon the greatest battlefield on the American continent. From the top of a high steel tower I looked out over the hills which stretched away before me. Four hundred white monuments gleamed in the Pennsylvania sunshine. In the form of a gigantic question mark they lay, with Little Round Top on the lower end, and at the upper Culp's Hill. A mile away, facing the ques-

tion mark line, was Seminary Ridge. In imagination, the whole field seemed to live again, and I could see the long lines of gray as they came marching from the shelter of the woods yonder on the ridge, down into the valley of death. Was there ever a spectacle more sublime than that, as the army of Northern Virginia, with bands playing as though on dress parade, marched into the jaws of death. Onward they came until they met the long lines of blue waiting, with nerves taut, for their coming. Hundreds of guns were turned upon them, from Round Top to Culp's Hill, tearing great gaps in their ranks; but still on they came until they met the stone wall and attained the clump of oak trees which stands to this day. Onward and onward, until only a few remained to drift back broken-hearted to the ridge. On Cemetery Hill, to-day, these men of the blue and the gray, our fathers, who so gloriously baptized the fields and hills of Gettysburg with their heroic blood, lie sleeping. Loving hands have builded on this sacred ground monuments of granite, bronze and marble. But in our hearts they live forever, in memorials ever green because of what they did there to dedicate that ground, that the "government of the people, for the people, and by the people, should not perish from the earth."

Again I stood upon a great battlefield in the sunny land of France. Before me, stretched away, neatly, row on row, twenty-five thousand white crosses, and on each cross there, so whitely gleaming in the warm sunshine, I read the names of our own American boys. These sons of the men who sleep on Gettysburg field were of heroic breed. And as their fathers

fought and died, so they have dedicated forever this land to a new and a more glorious freedom. All over a mighty nation will be builded monuments to the men of the Argonne and all those other fields made forever glorious in history because of the deeds of noble men. Yes, we are familiar with the meaning of memorials.

Upon a little hill in the far westland, where the firs are whispering in the evening breezes which sob and sigh from off Old Pacific's bosom, are two graves. The place is a sacred shrine to me. To it I go that I may renew my vows, strengthen my resolution, and refresh my memories of those who sleep beneath the springing grass. One is the resting place of a brother, a brave soldier boy, the first man from his state to give his life for his country in the World War. Bright and happy was he when, at eighteen, he heard the call, and answered, with eyes clear and heart strong, for the battle of right. The other one died too, as a soldier, a grand veteran of the cross. For a quarter of a century, he stood before his classes in the noble building which, even now, rears its stately form in the valley below. In that quarter of a century, he poured his very life into the hundreds of young men and women who, to this hour, are telling the story of the love of Christ, to the ends of the earth. In this sacred spot, I hear again the words he taught, I see again his smile of love, I am stirred again by his mighty message of power. And in such hallowed associations, is it not easy for a son to catch a new vision of the glory of the life in Christ. Truly, to me this memorial, this remembering of him, brings strength and purging of soul with high resolve.

And, so it is, when we come together to remember Jesus in His Supper, in this token which He left us. To the man uninitiated, it may seem strange that we should break a little piece of bread and drink from a cup, but to the man who has experienced all that reconciliation means,—who has known Christ,—this is a reminder of Him, it brings anew to his soul all that Calvary means. Such a stirring up of our minds by way of remembrance serves to purify the heart by His love. It was the preaching of the cross which first evoked faith in our hearts, the preaching of the death and suffering of our Saviour which first brought us to repentance. And that which brought us to Him is brought again and again to our minds; as we partake of the Supper of the Lord, the same emotions are stirred within our hearts, which consecrate us anew to Him.

There are four positions which are clear as we conclude.

1. It has been evident from our study that the Lord's Supper is not only a memorial, but that it is also sacramental, it actually does something, conveys something to our souls. Because he has so splendidly summarized the whole matter, I quote Dr. Cave at length here. "In addition to being a memorial in remembrance of the death of Christ, it may be inferred for the purposes assigned for its institution that the Lord's Supper was to be a sacrament. To its symbolic nature it added a sacramental. That such also was its purpose might be assumed, both from its divine institution and from the position it occupied relative to the sacramental sacrifices of Judaism; in fact, it would

be next to impossible, on the one hand, to dissociate from the fact that our Lord Himself had instituted this rite the further fact that it was instituted to work some spiritual advantage, and, on the other hand, for the Apostles, with all the prepossession of their early religious training, not to see in this ordinance a means of divine blessing. But the express words of the New Testament countenance the sacramental import of the Eucharist. 'Take, eat; this is my body,' 'Drink ye all of it, this blood shed for the remission of sins,'—these very words imply a sacramental significance. 'Eat this body' is the command, not 'Eat this bread'; 'Drink this blood' was said, not 'Drink this wine': it is no mere eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of the dead; it is a spiritual participation, renewed at every celebration, in the effects wrought by the death of Jesus. Besides, how could Paul dwell upon the ability to discern the Lord's body, as a necessary prerequisite for communion, unless that prerequisite was to conduct into some great privilege? A participation on the part of a skeptic might equally serve to keep the name of Christ in remembrance; none but a believer could receive sacramental advantage." [14]

2. A second thing we should note in closing is that of our attitude as we observe the Supper. Many there are who say, "I would come to the Supper, but I am a sinner; I have fallen many times during the week; I am not worthy to come." Much confusion has arisen from a misunderstanding of what Paul meant when he said, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread, or drink the cup of the Lord, in an unworthy manner

[14] "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," Cave, p. 471.

[unworthily, A.V.], shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord" (I Cor. 11:27). It is the manner of our observance which counts. The Corinthians had made of the Lord's Supper a drunken feast. They had actually become intoxicated at His table. It is this that Paul so fiercely condemns. If the observance were conditioned upon our being worthy, there is not one who would partake, for none of us are worthy. I thank God every time I come to the feast of love that my approach is not conditioned upon my worthiness. The very fact that we are unworthy and need cleansing is the reason for our coming. If the Supper is sacramental, if it is a channel or medium through which the Father works our advantage in the remission of our sins as sinning Christians, then, surely, the very fact of our unworthiness is the reason for our coming. If, when we come, we do not discern the body, if we think not of it all in the sense in which it was given us and in its real significance, if we are in a light-hearted attitude, then we are observing it in an unworthy manner. If we come laughing and thinking of everything else but that of which we should think, then we come under the condemnation of the Apostle when he tells of the unworthy manner of its observance.

3. The time of our observance of the Supper becomes important also. It should be enough for us to know that the Apostles, guided in their actions by the Holy Spirit, came together on the Lord's Day, to remember Him in His appointed ordinance. We need the stirring of heart and conscience which the Lord's Supper gives us. To the objection that a fre-

quent observance of the feast tends to lessen its sacredness, it is only necessary to reply that this can never be true to any one who has ever really understood just what the Supper means. When we comprehend it in its sacramental significance, it can never lose its sacred power in our lives. In fact, the very opposite is true if there is anything at all in the lengthy argument in which we have just indulged. If this whole conception has real basis, there is but one time to observe it if we would keep its New Testament meaning in our souls,—the first day of the week, as the Apostles so nobly set us the example.

4. Finally, a word about those who have the right to partake. I have searched the Scriptures from beginning to end, and I have failed to find a single word about open communion. The term simply does not occur in the New Testament. I have hunted just as diligently for the Scripture defending close communion. We will avoid many entanglements if we will use Scriptural terms for Scriptural ideas. The Lord's Supper is universally taught as instituted for His disciples. If a man believes in Christ as Lord, and follows Him as Prophet, he has the right to come to the table and commune with his Master. The Church will occupy an unshakable position if she will hold to this fact. It is the Lord's table, for the Lord's people, and we have the responsibility only to see that on the Lord's Day it is spread. Our responsibility ends there. If I say to a man, "You cannot come; I will not allow you, for you are not worthy," I am examining him, and Paul says that each man is to examine himself and so is he to eat. Let us continue to keep the feast in love until He comes.